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[THE FORGERY DETECTED.]

## BREAKING THE CHARM.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Tempting Fortune," "Scarlet Berries," &c., &c.

### CHAPTER XIII.

Let me essay, oh, muse! to follow the wanderer's footstep;  
Not through each devious path, each painful year of existence;  
But as a traveller follows a streamlet's course through the valley:  
Far from its margin at times, and seeing the gleam of its water  
Here and there, in some open space, and at intervals only;  
Then, drawing nearer its banks, through sylvan gloom that conceal it,  
Though he behold it not, he can hear its continuous murmur;  
Happy, at length, if he find the spot where it reaches an outlet.  
Evangeline.

It was in vain that the baronet inquired of the landlady for some information respecting Milly. She had not seen her leave the house, and willingly allowed him to search every room, not excepting the kitchen, but his explorations were without success.

Then, finding himself foiled, he introduced himself to the count, and apologized for any seeming rudeness on his part.

Count Montado explained that his acquaintance with Milly was slight, but that he knew some friends of hers who had commissioned him to call upon her and deliver a message.

As it would have been the height of rudeness to do so, Sir Elliott refrained from asking any farther questions.

"If you are returning to the West End, count," said Sir Elliott, "I shall be glad to accompany you, as I wish to call upon my friend Cardington."

The count acquiesced, smiling in his agreeable, feminine manner, and arm in arm they left the house.

Sir Elliott found his new acquaintance a desirable one, and was taken into his chambers, where they

were joined by Lord Cardington. The count said that he had been backwards and forwards into the country, but that he should stay in town until the end of the season, and hoped that he might often have the pleasure of seeing them.

Sir Elliott again inquired for Milly, but could learn nothing more respecting her than that which the count had related to him. The landlady said that she had gone to Paris unexpectedly, and that a friend called, paid her rent, and took her things away.

Then all trace of her was lost.

At the same time Lord Cardington discovered that Ariadne Mallison had gone away. We have hinted that she bribed his lordship's valet to betray his movements, which was the case; and Cardington one day found a letter from her telling his servant that she should not require his services any longer, as she intended to seek increased privacy by burying herself many miles from London, at a retired part of the sea coast.

His lordship immediately discharged the valet, and told his friend Sir Elliott of the discovery he had made.

"So both women have gone," he added; "and I am not sorry. I could have loved Milly, but to marry her was too great a sacrifice. I must turn my attention into another direction. As for Ariadne Mallison, I hate her; I cannot bear her name."

"Men would lead quieter and happier lives if they were not worried by women," answered Sir Elliott; "yet I should advise you to be on your guard against Milly Haines, for I hear that Mrs. Mallison left her a fortune on the condition that she used it to ruin you."

"What earthly harm can she do me, my dear fellow?" said his lordship, with a contemptuous laugh. "I am unscrupulous, and a dangerous enemy. Besides, the girl has vanished—no doubt preferring the delights of Paris and the amusement of foreign travel, and the chance of picking up a foreign nobleman for a husband—"

"As she has failed in catching an English lord," "Precisely. No doubt, I say, she prefers all this

to living in dingy lodgings in London, existing in the vain hope of doing me some impossible harm. Such fears as yours are childish; and, as for ruining me, I am pretty well done for already. My uncle, the duke, will advance no more money. The Jews have stopped the supplies, and are clamouring for what they have already lent me; and, upon my word, I don't know what is to become of me!"

"Say us, for I am in the same plight. If you disappear from the festive scene so must I," said Sir Elliott, with a sigh.

"I don't see why we should despair," continued Lord Cardington, taking a more hopeful view of the case. "The duke would not like to see me driving a hansom cab, and I am already looking after the great City heiress, Miss Goldsmith. You have heard of her father, the banker?"

"Yes. I wish I had his name to a bill for a large amount."

"Those City men rise from nothing," continued his lordship, "then they wish to get into good society. In this aristocratic country a title is worth a great deal. I value mine at a hundred thousand pounds, and think it cheap at the price. Miss Goldsmith is not ugly—on the contrary, I like her face; but a poor man does not marry faces, he marries purses. She likes me, so does her father. Yet my character is so atrociously bad that the old man hangs back a little, and what to do for ready money I don't know."

"I have an idea by means of which we can raise some," replied Sir Elliott; "your neighbour, the count."

"A mysterious fellow whom I do not like, and not nearly so simple as he looks," answered his lordship, hastily.

"I have found him extremely easy going," continued Sir Elliott, "and I am persuaded that if you wrote his name on a bill and took it to Mordecai Moss, who has done so much discounting for you, he would give you the money for it without making any inquiries."

"That would be forgery!" "I know it; but in three months you could either

marry the heiress or go to your uncle, the duke, and get a sum large enough to take it up. How much do we want to carry us on for the next three months? It is the beginning of the London season, which is the most expensive time of the year. In the autumn and the winter one can get invitations to country houses, and go from one to another, and live upon nothing; but now it is different—will five thousand do?"

"I think it would, and as we are in such a desperate strait I will risk the experiment; though I should not like to make my appearance at the Old Bailey."

"No danger of that," answered Sir Elliott; "your friends would not permit you to fall into disgrace."

This conversation made a deep impression upon Lord Cardington, and, as Sir Elliott pressed him to commit the forgery, and he was terribly distressed for money, he at last yielded. The bill for five thousand pounds was drawn. Count Montado's name was forged to it, and Mr. Mordecai Moss gave the two gentlemen the money for it, they trusting to chance and luck to be able to pay it when in three months it became due.

In the meantime the London season went on, with its countless festivities. Count Montado and Lord Cardington became fast friends. They were constantly seen together. In doing this the latter was acting upon the advice of Sir Elliott Bridges. "For," said Sir Elliott, "if everything goes wrong, and we cannot pay the bill, you can appeal to the count's friendship for you, and beg him not to prosecute. In all likelihood he will readily yield to your request, and send the note over until we can meet it."

The lady whom Lord Cardington was trying to marry was a pretty little blonde. She was deeply impressed with the importance her father's wealth gave her, and determined not to espouse any man who could not give her a title in return for her thousands.

She took a great fancy to Lord Cardington, as women usually did, and her father made him a welcome guest at their princely mansion at the West End.

Count Montado was introduced to the family by his lordship, and as a reputed rich foreigner, if not a distinguished one, he was well received.

Matters progressed so satisfactorily that Amy Goldsmith agreed to accept his lordship as her affianced husband.

His confession of love was made in a conservatory attached to the ball-room of Mr. Goldsmith's house, after one of the most brilliant assemblies of a gay season, just drawing to a close.

Amy, hiding her blushes behind her fan, allowed her lover to hold her hand in his.

"I accept you, Claude," she said, "in reply to a fervent address from him, and addressing him by his Christian name. "But I should like to have an assurance from your own lips that you have never loved before."

"Never," he replied, "I swear it on my honour." "You know I am rich, and you have told me you are poor," she continued. "I have refused a dozen men because I thought they were actuated by unworthy motives in seeking my hand. There is no being so detestable in my opinion as a fortune hunter."

"I love you for your own dear self alone," exclaimed his lordship, scarcely able to contain his exultation at the heiress's compliance with his demands.

"On those terms then I accept you, but if I should be satisfied that you are deceiving me, and that you have whispered words of love into any other woman's ear, I shall consider myself at liberty to discard you. I give you my first love, and I must have the same from you in return."

"Darling girl," cried Lord Cardington, rapturously, "let me kiss your hand, in token that the compact is sealed between us."

She suddenly started and uttered a slight scream as she was about to suffer him to do so.

"There is some one behind that orange tree!" she exclaimed. "I heard a rustle!"

"What matters if there is? The guests who crowd your rooms to-night will soon be aware that I am about to lead you to the altar, and call you Lady Cardington."

Amy Goldsmith's face flushed with pleasure, for her pride was gratified by the expectation of possessing a loving heart and an old title.

"You shiver, dearest," he said, tenderly; "let me draw your cloak closer round your shoulders."

"I know not why," she answered, looking up at him with a sweet smile. "The air is not cold, yet I tremble as if with the fear of coming danger."

"It is the agitation naturally arising from the scene you have just gone through. Remain here, my pet, while I seek your father and acquaint him with the happy decision at which you have just arrived."

Lord Cardington pressed her hand once more, and passed his palm gently over her soft, silky hair.

Then he was gone.

Amy Goldsmith did not remain long alone. A shadow glided out of the shelter of a group of orange trees and a man placed himself by her side.

"Count Montado!" cried Amy, in alarm.

"Do not let my presence startle you, Miss Goldsmith," replied the count. "But I have been an involuntary listener to Lord Cardington's confession of love and your acceptance of his suit."

"Your conduct is unworthy, sir."

"Pardon me. I should not have mentioned the circumstance had I not wished to save you from a great danger."

"Me! Save me!" she repeated.

"Yes. You declared that you could never entertain any affection for a man who had loved another."

"I cannot deny that I said so," answered Amy, becoming interested in spite of herself.

"What would you say to a man who habitually tramples upon the affections of your sex, who pretends to love merely to deceive, and, having gained his point, basely abandons his victims to the mercy of the world and a cruel and hopeless fate?"

"Such a villain should never have the privilege of speaking to me again, whatever the cost might be to me. I would pluck his image from my heart, and cast the worthless thing away for ever."

"Lord Cardington is such a man," said Count Montado, fixing his soft, expressive eyes upon her.

A feeling of faintness came over Amy, and it was with difficulty that she bore up under the shock of such an announcement.

"But, sir," she said, recovering herself, "you are his friend, you were introduced into this house under his auspices. How am I to understand this extraordinary hostility on your part?"

"In reality I am not his friend," replied the count.

"You are not?"

"No, we are simply acquaintances. I happen to know something of his private life. No matter where or how I gained the information. I do not like to see the affections of a young lady played with. You may not thank me at present for my information, but a time will come, when on calm reflection you will do so. You may meet some one who will love you for yourself, and your future life will be happy instead of miserable."

"I cannot believe that you are animated by honest motives," said Amy, in perplexity.

"His lordship is hopelessly misled."

"Of that I am aware. But what proof have I of the truth of your allegation?"

"Ask him if he did not beguile from her mother's house a lady named Ariadne Mallison, whom he betrayed by a mock marriage and deserted subsequently in Brussels."

"Ariadne Mallison," repeated Amy, abstractedly, as if trying to engrave the name on her memory.

"Ask him if he did not trifle with the affections of Milly Haines, and deceive her in the same base way," continued the count.

"If the nobleman whose character you expose is so bad why do you associate with him?" asked Amy, sharply.

"I have my reasons."

"This is inexplicable to me."

"You are warned; remember that your fate is in your own hands," the count continued.

The sound of footsteps was heard approaching, and the mysterious foreigner glided away as he had come, leaving his mellifluous tones ringing in his listener's ears.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

Oh! when shall I marry my darling? he said.  
Oh! when, and oh, when shall I marry my pet?  
Oh! tell me, my dearest one, when we shall wed.  
But the maiden replied, with a sigh, Not yet.

It was Lord Cardington, who returned after holding a brief conference with Mr. Goldsmith, during which the rich banker gave consent to his lordship's marriage with his daughter, provided he could arrange all the preliminaries with her.

The strains of music coming from the ball-room floated deliciously on the perfumed air, and the merry laughter and sweet voices of the girl dancers were borne softly towards the conservatory.

"You have been crying," said his lordship.

Indeed, the tears were falling fast, and bedewing Amy's damask cheeks.

"Something has happened," continued Lord Cardington, feeling faint at heart as his instincts told him that something at variance with his interests had occurred.

"You must answer two questions, my lord," said Amy Goldsmith, with dignity.

"With pleasure," he replied.

"How long is it since you have seen Ariadne Mallison?"

"I have not seen her since she left London."

"And how long is it since you have seen Milly Haines?"

"I have not seen her since she left London."

"And how long is it since you have seen Milly Haines?"

"I have not seen her since she left London."

Lord Cardington staggered as if he had been shot, and turned deadly pale.

Thrown off his guard in the midst of his triumph, he exclaimed, angrily,

"Has the witch been here? I thought she had left London. Am I to be ever haunted by her, and frustrated in my plans at every turn?"

"Enough," said Amy. "Your remarks satisfy me that my suspicions are well founded."

"Your other question?" he demanded, hoarsely.

"Did you not swear to love Milly Haines, as you have vowed this evening to love me?"

He sank into a chair by her side, and breathed heavily.

"Her work," he muttered; "her foul work. She is ever present at the critical moment. She is my bane; and, if I hated her before, I detest her ten thousand times more now."

Amy gazed at him in scorn and despair.

She could not doubt now that Count Montado had spoken the truth, wherever he had derived his information, and whatever his object in disclosing it might have been.

Lord Cardington, at length, saw the necessity of speaking, and striving to remove the bad impression that his half-confusion had made upon the beautiful heiress, who an hour before was in his grasp.

"The woman who has told you this is an enemy of mine," he said. "She slanders me on every possible occasion. Do not pay any heed to her random stories. I would not marry her. She wanted my title, and she is revengeful because I would not return her affection, as she called it."

"You loved her?"

"Never."

"You told her so; and you must have cared for her, or you would not have abandoned her to her own resources in a foreign country."

"You know that?" he cried, the veins on his forehead tightening and growing black and swollen.

"I do, and I recall the promises I just now gave to become your wife. Henceforth, my lord, we meet as strangers," said Amy Goldsmith.

He became maddened. His keen disappointment created in his brain a species of frenzy.

"Very well," he said. "You will not again have a chance of picking up a coronet which a nobleman, forgetful of his ancient lineage, has laid at your feet."

"Oh, yes," replied Amy, with a light, sarcastic laugh. "My experience with you has taught me that coronets may be bought."

"Do you wish to drive me mad? Reflect; do not act hastily, I implore you."

"Good-night, or rather good-bye, my lord," answered Amy. "We shall never meet again with my consent, and I feel that I have had a narrow escape."

"Of what?" he demanded.

"Of becoming the wife of an unprincipled and profligate rascal, who does not hold the honour of women sacred; and when that is the case a man is not fit to be admitted within the limits of a family circle. Go, and associate with companions as abandoned as yourself." And she walked away, murmuring:

"My fortune is safe, but my heart is broken."

Her fortune enabled her to bear up until she was alone, then she wept bitterly, for she had loved this man, and girls who have truly loved know how difficult it is to eradicate a passion from the heart, even when they know it is their duty to do so, and that the happiness of their whole future depends upon the rightful issue of the terrible trial.

It was long before she recovered from the blow, but she had youth, beauty and wealth on her side, and those advantages can always command suitors in abundance.

Her father fully approved of the decision she had arrived at when he heard her reason, for, though he wished to make an aristocratic alliance, he had his daughter's welfare at heart.

Lord Cardington left the house without a word, seeing that it was useless, for the present at least, to urge Amy Goldsmith farther. He hoped, in time, that her anger would cool and her resentment soften.

But he was mistaken.

She resolutely refused to see or hold any communication with him. His letters were returned unopened, and he fully believed that he had Ariadne to thank for the blow, and hated her more than ever, never supposing for an instant that Count Montado was his secret foe.

So it is frequently in life. We go hand-in-hand with people who are always watching for an opportunity of doing us an injury, yet we do not suspect them.

All this while the forged acceptance was running on to maturity, and the failure of his lordship's intentions with Miss Goldsmith made him feel more and more uneasy. His civility to Count Montado in-



creased, much to that gentleman's astonishment, for he could not understand the motive.

It all became clear to him, however, when, one day, his servant, Fred Garron, brought him a card upon which was inscribed the name of Mordecai Moss.

"Show him in," said the count.

Mr. Mordecai Moss he knew by report to be the rich bill-discounter of the West End, who had more titled men in his power than any one else in London. He lent his money at cent. per cent., and there was little escape from the tolls when the unhappy victim was once within them.

"Mr. Moss," said Count Montado, looking at the card curiously.

"You may have heard of me, your excellency," said Mr. Moss, with a low bow.

"I have, but why you should call upon me I cannot imagine. I am not in the habit of borrowing money. I can lend you some, if you want it," replied the count.

Mordecai Moss smoothed his curly, glossy black hair, and stroked his crooked nose with a significant air.

Then he took out of his pocket a greasy pocket-book which had seen some service in its time. Turning over several papers by the easy but not very pleasant means of winking his fingers by putting them in his mouth, he handed a bill to the count, who took it and looked at it with astonishment.

"That's your signature, your lordship," said the Jew, who always liked to give people a title, and did not quite know what to call the count.

"Decidedly it is not," answered Montado.

"But there's the name," persisted Mr. Moss, "Alphonso Montado, plain ash life. The billish drawn by my friend, Lord Cardington, and accepted by Count Alphonso Montado."

"It would appear so."

The count, as he spoke, took up a sheet of paper, and rapidly wrote his name upon it.

"That is my signature," he added.

"Then this is a forgery," cried Mordecai Moss, excitedly.

"Undoubtedly."

"Oh, Moses! Oh, please my soul! Vat a rogue he must be," exclaimed the Jew, skipping about the room. "He owes me fifteen thousand pound, every halfpenny of it, and this will be a dead loss. But I will prosecute him for it. I will 'ave him up at the Old Bailey, and if there is law in the land I will 'ave my monish."

"I can sympathize very little with you, Mr. Moss," said the count, "because you ought not to have discounted a bill of this magnitude without making necessary inquiries. Your proper course would have been to come to me and ask me if it was my signature. I suppose you charged an enormous percentage, and I do not think any jury would lean much on your side."

"I will 'ave my pound of flesh if I cannot 'ave my monish," cried Mordecai Moss, frantically.

"That is what Shylock said in the play, yet he obtained neither one nor the other. But I'll tell you what I will do. I will give you half the amount for the bill, and prosecute Lord Cardington myself for forging my name if he do not repay me."

After a great deal of haggling the Jew agreed to accept these terms. If he prosecuted the forger he thought he should get nothing, and half the amount was better than that. To write off so large a sum as a bad debt would have been a great grief to him, and after talking for nearly an hour he took a cheque for exactly one half the amount of the bill, and went away, leaving the acceptance in the hands of the count.

"Now I have him; now he is in my power," cried the count when he was alone. "At last, and by an accident of which I knew nothing beforehand, Claude, Lord Cardington, is as helpless in my hands as if his deadliest enemy had delivered him to me bound hand and foot. With his forged acceptance I can do anything."

A peculiar smile of triumph stole over the face of the count as he put the forged bill in his pocket.

Mordecai Moss was not long in disclosing to Lord Cardington what had occurred with regard to the bill of exchange.

"Shelp me never, my lord," he exclaimed, "I was astonished. How could you play me such a dirty trick. Two thousand five hundred for a bill of five thousand. It is too bad. You will 'ave to make it up to me. The count has got the bill, and I am sorry now I gave it up to him."

Lord Cardington went back to his chambers much perturbed, for he had met the count as usual, and he had said nothing to him about the forged bill.

He told Sir Elliott Bridges what had occurred, and the baronet shook his head dubiously.

"Do you know, Elliott," said his lordship, "I always distrusted that man, with his dove-like eyes and his soft voice."

"Why?" asked the baronet.

"I do not know why, but I have always had a misgiving that he was destined to work me some harm." They lighted fresh cigars, and there was a pause.

"I had a man some time ago," continued Lord Cardington, "who would have done anything for me. But unfortunately he has been convicted and sentenced to penal servitude. Those fellows are not easily met with."

"How did you stumble upon him?"

"He attempted to rob me, and I detected him in the act. Instead of handing him over to the police, I made the unscrupulous ruffian my slave, and he has stood me in good stead on more than one occasion. I hear that he is now at Portland Island, near Weymouth."

"What made you think of him?" asked Sir Elliott.

"I will tell you. If this fellow, Count Montado, whom nobody knows anything about, could be put out of the way the danger would blow over. He has bought up my bill from Mordecai Moss, and it does not come to maturity for a fortnight. Suppose when it is due, and not met, that he should declare it is a forgery. That will be very pleasant, will it not? I can already fancy myself at the Marlborough Police-court."

"And your uncle, the Duke of Lewes?"

"Would leave me to my fate, and be glad to get rid of me. I have no doubt about that. What shall I—what can I do?"

"Let me see," answered Sir Elliott, who was a man of ready resources. "You have invited a few men to have a cruise on board your yacht. The 'Foam' is at present at Greenwich. Did you ask Montado?"

"Yes."

"Did he accept?"

"I think he did," said Lord Cardington.

"Very well. What is easier than to shove him overboard on a dark night when no one is looking? I don't think either your position or mine admits of any scruples of conscience."

"I'll do it, Elliott," cried Lord Cardington, "and I am obliged to you for the suggestion. This is the 27th of July; on the 10th of August the bill becomes due. When shall we sail? I think I fixed the 8th of August, the day after the rising of Parliament."

"Nothing could be better," said Sir Elliott. "The 8th be it. That will be two clear days before the bill falls due."

"That man cannot live. He must die," said Lord Cardington, in a solemn voice.

"He shall, if I have any voice in your counsels," answered Sir Elliott, with a stern and uncompromising gesture.

In this careless way was the fate of Count Montado settled by two aristocrats who were the spoiled pets and darlings of London society.

#### CHAPTER IV.

We lose our right of complaining sometimes by forbearing it, but we often trade the force.

Tristram Shandy.

It was a lovely day in August when the "Foam," Lord Cardington's yacht, set sail from Greenwich, where it had been lying for some time.

Half a dozen friends, including Count Montado and Sir Elliott Bridges, had been invited by his lordship, and, being of good tonnage and sufficient accommodation, the yacht sailed down the Thames for a fortnight's pleasure cruise.

Every delicacy of the season and wine in abundance had been taken on board. The invited guests made their saloon very comfortable, and all was harmony and good nature.

The count was the last to suspect the diabolical plot which had been invented by Sir Elliott Bridges for his destruction, and he made himself as agreeable with his enemies as they could wish.

Old Piggot, the skipper, shook his head as the sun went down, and prophesied that after a calm there would come a storm; but none of the gay and thoughtless guests attached any importance to his words.

Count Montado did not speak about the forged bill, and Lord Cardington, having got away from his creditors, did not allow a single care to disturb his selfish heart.

The latter was one of those men who do not allow trouble to worry them so long as it is not knocking at their doors.

If it was ever present it annoyed him, but if he was away from it he dismissed it from his mind and made himself happy as long as the day lasted.

Piggot, the skipper, however, grew more and more cautious as the day narrowed. He slackened sail, and suggested to his lordship, as they got well into the chops of the Channel, that they should put in somewhere.

"Nonsense," said his lordship. "The sea is as

calm as a millpond, and I want to get to Ryde as soon as possible. Mine is a steam yacht. What have you to be afraid of?"

"She makes bad weather, sir," replied Piggot.

"Let her make what weather she likes. Push on. Go ahead; and don't try to frighten me with your croaking," answered Lord Cardington, upon whom the champagne he had imbibed had already begun to take effect.

He rejoined his friends in the cabin. Some were playing cards, some drinking, some smoking and talking. It was growing dark, and the sea began to roll a little in consequence of the getting up of the wind, and the ship rocked to and fro, but as all the guests had been to sea before the motion did not affect them.

"It looks like a stormy night. I don't like it," said Sir Elliott Bridges, who had just come down the companion.

"Let it blow. We can hug the coast, and with our engines we are quite safe," replied his lordship. "Light a cigar, and send the steward for another pack of cards. We have plenty of means of making ourselves happy."

So the time passed.

The sea grew more angry by degrees, and the skipper once or twice ventured to remonstrate with his imperious master, but was only laughed at for his pains.

At length the gentlemen turned in, and did not know how the war of the elements increased.

The wind blew a perfect hurricane, and the yacht shook from stem to stern. The sea rose in huge waves and threatened to engulf her.

The skipper went to Lord Cardington's cabin, and strove to arouse him, but in vain. He was wrapped in a drunken slumber.

It was near morning now, and the gray dawn was breaking in the East, but the wind and rain blew up a blinding mist which obscured the light of the rising sun.

They were, as well as the skipper could make out, off the island of Portland, and he determined to run the vessel into Weymouth, which was the nearest seaport, if he could manage it.

Giving his orders accordingly, he awaited the result with anxiety, for so great was the violence of the wind that every sea washed over them, and it was impossible to carry a rag of canvas.

Owing to the shipping of water, there was a danger of the fire in the engine-room going out, and so great was the confusion on board that the gentlemen woke up, and, coming on deck, began with downcast looks to comprehend the serious aspect of affairs.

The wind was blowing off shore and therefore dead in their teeth, which lessened their chance of making Weymouth.

Portland Island was dimly defined through the mist on their left, and its rocky shore looked dismal and forbidding as they approached it.

About six o'clock the skipper approached the group of gentlemen, who, pale and trembling, were standing aft.

"It is impossible to make Weymouth, my lord," he said.

"What shall we do?" replied his lordship.

"Better turn the engines and run before the wind to the coast of France."

"I don't want to go to France. I have friends waiting for me at Ryde," answered Lord Cardington. "Run the ship in here, and send the steward to me."

"She won't want much running, my lord," replied the skipper, "we're in a cross wind already."

As he spoke the chief engineer approached, and informed him that the last sea they shipped had extinguished the engine fire.

At the same time a huge sea struck her stern and broke the rudder, so that the "Foam" was at the mercy of the wind and waves.

The tide was setting in strongly, and they were not more than a mile from the shore. Owing to the position in which they were placed, and the location of the island, the wind drove them to the leeward, and they drifted rapidly towards the shore.

Piggot folded his arms, and gave such directions as he saw were of use and capable of execution, and awaited the sequel, satisfied in his own mind that his employer rather than himself was to blame for the impending catastrophe.

But with a seaman's obedience to orders is always the first thought.

Lord Cardington and Sir Elliott Bridges looked anxiously at the foaming sea.

There were too many eyes on board to allow them to carry their purpose respecting Count Montado into execution just then, but they glanced anxiously at him as if they hoped if the ship were wrecked he would be lost when she sank to rise no more.

As the sea rose and the winds blew and the rain beat upon the yacht they began to think more of their own lives than the fate of the count. They were

driven close in land. The "Foam" struck upon a rock, going to pieces almost immediately.

Every one was struggling in the water. Lord Cardington and Count Montado clung to a spar, and saw Sir Elliott Bridges sink before their eyes to rise no more, without being able to lend him any assistance.

A wave more gigantic than the rest bore them towards the shore and left them high and dry upon the beach, in sight of a small cottage which stood in front of them all by itself.

The forbidding heights of Portland Island rose behind them, and the town of Weymouth was on their left.

The inhabitants of the cottage, a fisherman named Hardy and his wife, were on the spot, for they, being early risers, had seen the yacht strike upon the rock and become a wreck.

Out of all the guests and the ship's crew Lord Cardington and Count Montado were the only ones saved, and they had escaped a dreadful death by a miracle.

Both were insensible when washed ashore.

The fisherman conveyed them into his cottage, and laid them upon the floor.

"Bestir theeself, wife," said Hardy, "and call your lodger. I'll chafe their hands and pour a drop of brandy down their throats, but two heads are better than one. It be an awful wreck."

Mrs. Hardy went upstairs and came back in a short time with a young woman plainly dressed, having a beautiful face whose expression was somewhat marred by its sadness.

No sooner had she gazed upon the features of the foremost gentleman than she exclaimed:

"Claude, can it be my—but no. My senses deceive me."

Mrs. Hardy regarded her with astonishment.

"Do you know the gentleman?" she said. "He be some fine person from London mayhap."

She knelt down by his side and kissed his pale face, murmuring:

"It is. It must be Cardington. Has Heaven preserved him from a fate to meet another which he may deem worse?"

Mrs. Hardy busied herself with Count Montado, who was injured about the head and seemed in a deep stupor.

"Here, man," she said to her husband, "look at this. See, the hair is long and the face is smooth. What is it? He has a man's clothes, but a woman's face."

Hardy could not understand this strange remark, and was just about to cross over to his wife's side of the room when Lord Cardington recovered sufficiently to open his eyes and look around him.

"Where am I?" he said. "The yacht. Oh, I remember now. We were wrecked, and you, I suppose, have saved us."

The fisherman raised him up, letting him lean his back against his knee, and gave him some more brandy.

Presently his senses came back to him, and he looked around. His glance fell first upon the lodger whom Mrs. Hardy had called up.

"Ariadne!" he exclaimed.

His astonishment was intense. Before him he saw Ariadne Mallison, the woman whom he had wronged, she who at various times had wrought him so much injury.

How could she be in a fisherman's cottage, miles away from London? How could she confront him at such a moment? It must be fate.

"Claude," said Ariadne, "I always thought we should meet when you least expected it. The rencontre, rest assured, was not of my seeking."

"Nor of mine," he answered.

"Who is your friend?" she continued, pointing to Count Montado.

"I know not. Who is saved, who lost?"

"Only this person besides yourself is saved. Look at him. He was on board your yacht."

"Have all else perished?" asked Lord Cardington, as he looked in the direction indicated by her finger.

"All but yourself and your friend," replied Ariadne.

The count presented a strange spectacle.

His whiskers and moustache had fallen off, and his hair, which had formerly appeared short and crisp, fell in long, wavy tresses of golden light over his shoulder.

The eyes were closed and the face pale as death.

"It is—great Heaven! It is Milly!" cried Lord Cardington.

"Did you not know? Have you been imposed upon by this disguise, for such it must have been?" asked Ariadne.

"Such mysteries crowd upon me that I am lost in amazement," answered his lordship. "Here I meet you whom I imagined gone away for ever, and I find that my friend, Count Montado, is a woman. Am I

dreaming, or am I awake? Have I been drowned, or am I really saved from the wreck of my yacht?"

"You are awake and living. Explain this to me. I have a right to demand an explanation," said Ariadne.

Mr. and Mrs. Hardy regarded them both with the utmost amazement.

"First of all tell me how you came here," replied Lord Cardington.

"My retreat in London was found out by this woman," said Ariadne, pointing to Milly. "I hated her because you had once loved her, and I told her so. Being banished from society, I did not wish any one to know where I was living, so I came to Weymouth, where I have maintained myself by my skill as a milliner. Each night I have come back here to this lone cottage, where I lodge, and I fancied that none of my former acquaintances would ever find me out in my seclusion."

"Strange," answered Lord Cardington, musingly.

"Now you have to enlighten me," she said.

"I can tell you no more than that I made the acquaintance of Count Montado in London, and that I never suspected for a moment that he was aught else than he represented himself to be."

"But you see that she is a woman—that she is Milly Haines."

"The whiskers and the wig have come off. I see it now, but how could I tell before? Many things which appeared strange to me are now explained. I met Milly at the count's chambers, and she disappeared. Bridges saw her, and was confronted with the count. But I shall only perplex you with these revelations, which you cannot possibly understand unless I go fully into the history of the past few months."

The combination of circumstances which had resulted in this strange meeting was indeed remarkable.

Ariadne was jealous of one whom she would regard as her rival, and she fancied that she had adopted a disguise in order to be always near Lord Cardington; yet she acquitted him of blame when he declared that he was unconscious of the imposition.

Milly's motive for assuming the character and dress of a man had yet to be explained.

Under the care of the fisherman's wife Milly recovered her consciousness. In an instant she saw that she had been discovered, and, as she put back her fair hair from her forehead, she recognized Lord Cardington, and blushed deeply.

To see Ariadne there was as deep a surprise to her as to his lordship, and she was about to make some remark which would obtain an explanation for her when Hardy the fisherman entered the cottage.

He was wet from head to foot, and seemed exhausted with his exertions to save the crew of the "Foam."

"No more have come to land!" he exclaimed. "You two are the only ones saved by Heaven's mercy. What a night! I've been a fisherman on these shores, man and boy, for over fifty years, and I never saw a worse."

Suddenly there was a sullen booming.

"Hark!" cried Hardy.

"What is that?" inquired Lord Cardington, who was now sitting on a chair before the fire.

"The signal gun at Portland Island. A prisoner has escaped."

Again the gun boomed out with the same sullen roar.

"Poor fellow," said the fisherman, "he will scarcely make the land if he ventures to swim in such a sea as there is on now. Well, if he drowns he'll end his trouble—better death than penal servitude."

Lord Cardington paid little heed to his remarks, not imagining that the escape of a convict could affect him.

He was mistaken, however, for this apparently trifling occurrence was to add one more startling sensation to the events of this singular night.

His mind was intent upon the loss of his yacht, the death of Sir Elliott Bridges and all his friends, the remarkable deception of which Milly had been the originator, and the strange appearance of Ariadne Mallison in a lonely hut upon a barren shore.

(To be continued.)

At a certain Court in Africa, if any one comes before the King without a full-dress costume—that is, a straw hat and a ring in his nose—his head goes into the waste basket before he can wink twice. In other parts headless things go into the waste basket.

THE DESCENDANTS OF BURNS.—Mrs. Eliza Everitt, widow of an assistant surgeon in the service of the East India Company, writes to various papers throughout the country contradicting the statement recently made to the effect that the only lineal surviving descendants of Robert Burns are the two daughters of his son James. Robert, the eldest son of the poet, was married in 1809, and of that marriage Mrs.

Everitt states that she is the only surviving child. She adds that she has one daughter, Martha Burns Everitt.

## SCIENCE.

BRICK DUST CEMENT.—In the Spanish dominions ordinary brick dust, made from hard burned, finely pulverized bricks, and mixed with common lime and sand, is universally and successfully employed as a substitute for hydraulic cement. It is a regular article of commerce, sold in barrels by all dealers in such articles, at the same price as cement. The proportions used in general practice are one of brick dust and one of lime to two of sand, mixed together dry and tempered with water in the usual way.

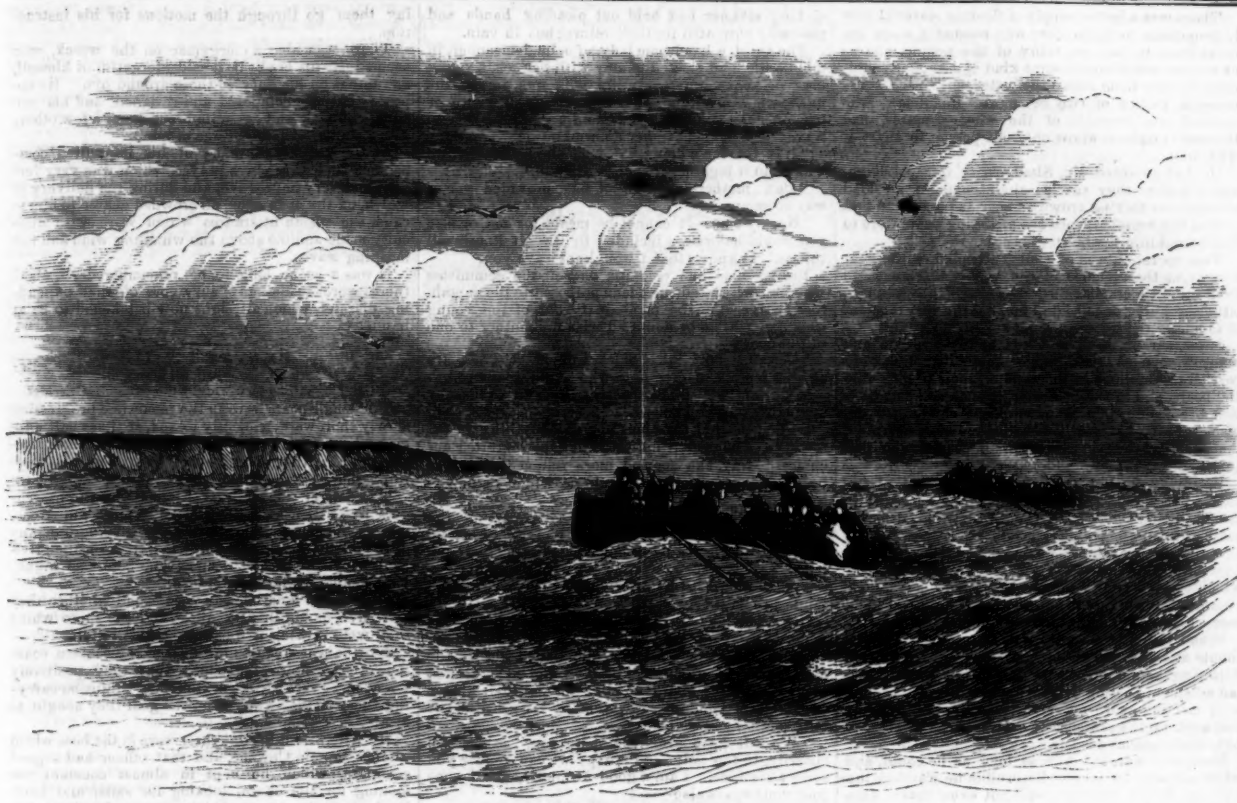
PATENT PAVEMENT LIGHTS.—In Hayward's patent light the reflecting face of each glass is placed at an angle so as to send the rays of light into the basement, in a direct line from the front, obviating the objection to the ordinary pavement light that only part radiates inwards, as the rays are dispersed equally in all directions. The cast-iron frame of Hayward's light is composed of hexagonal recesses, into which the lenses are set, the surface of the glass being below the upper edges of the iron net-work.

CIRCULATION OF THE BLOOD.—Blood from an artery is instantly distinguishable from that of the veins, by its bright scarlet colour; the latter being rather brown than red. The brown vein-blood has conveyed nutriment and oxygen to the parts in whose capillary vessels it has circulated, and is on its way back, as a dead and spent vehicle, to that division of the heart (or central double-acting pump), which will impel it into the lungs to be aerated or oxygenized, and again rendered scarlet and lifebearing, when it will return to the other division of the pump, to be sent on another tour by the arteries, into all parts of the body needing its nutriment. The minor tour in the lungs is necessary after every larger tour to restore its vivifying qualities for the next tour; this being effected only by its giving up carbonic acid to the air, and absorbing fresh oxygen. Brown venous blood, if shaken in a bottle with fresh air, or still more if exposed to oxygen, will become as red as arterial blood.

HOW TO DISINFECT A HOUSE.—Mix common salt and black manganese, about equal weights, and take about a pound of the mixed powder for each cubic yard in the house. Place it in a pan deep enough to hold thrice as much, in any room where you can arrange to upset a vessel of acid into it by pulling a string outside the house. This will be oil of vitriol, or boiled sulphuric acid (specific gravity 1.8), a weight double that of the manganese. Make all openings except chimneys air-tight, and leave no water or wet things within, or polished metals, unless you want them dimmed. Then pull the string that pours the acid on the powder. The object is to fill the house with chlorine gas, which, being heavy even while warm, will accumulate from the ground upward, expelling the air by the chimneys. However tight the lower openings, you will probably smell a little of it as a warm sea breeze. By next morning the law of gaseous diffusion will, even through the chimneys only, have disposed of all its traces; and it will meanwhile have found out every unclean atom, lurk where it may, and killed every germ or sperm, syrmic or animalcular, deadlier than any other killing known.

THE MANUFACTURE OF GUNPOWDER.—We understand that an officer of experience has written a pamphlet to prove that gunpowder should be made without sulphur. It is urged that the scoring which takes place in our heavy rifled muzzle-loading guns is due to the sulphur combining with particles of the iron at a very high temperature; thus the surface of the bore is gradually converted into sulphide of iron. The rapidity of inflammation is one of the causes upon which the explosive effect of gunpowder depends; and, as sulphur ignites at a much lower temperature than either nitre or charcoal, it is added to the mixture in order to render the inflammation of the two latter ingredients more rapid. Gunpowder can doubtless be made with nitre and charcoal alone, but the oxidation of such a mixture would proceed with comparative tardiness, and the gases would not develop their full expansion. The powder, moreover, would be very friable in the grain. Under these circumstances, it appears impossible to dispense with a substance of the nature and chemical properties of sulphur, and we do not know where to find a substitute. But, after all, is not this sulphur theory a fiction? Is the scoring due to the sulphur? Does it not equally occur when other explosives are used, such, for example, as gun-cotton, in which sulphur is not present? Is it not more probable that the scoring is due to the mechanical action of the gases as they rush between the shot and the bore? We believe these views are held by most artillerymen.





[LAND AHEAD.]

## ADA ARGYLE.

## CHAPTER VII.

Farewell! The fearful time  
Cuts off the ceremonious vows of love.

Richard III.

MR. ARGYLE himself announced to Ada with some degree of elation the good news that he was to accompany her in one of the boats, but the joy of both father and daughter was embittered by the consciousness that their friend must be left behind.

There was, however, no help for it, and the speculator expressed his usual sanguine views on the subject, encouraging Rashleigh not a little.

"The captain thinks she'll float for two hours yet," he said, "and I've no doubt she will; in fact, I'll give her four hours to sink in."

"I'll give her ten times that," replied Fred, smiling, for he was trying hard to keep up a show of courage, though he was by no means inclined to bravao.

"Ay—ay—so we will. Then you can paddle about here on your settee for twenty-four hours longer, if necessary, a young, vigorous man like you. Why, it will be mere sport, and in the meantime we may be able to send you help. You see the captain thinks there is a harbour not far distant, and boats of course, and we'll have everything in port started out at once. Only hold out—hold out till we come!"

This speech of the loud-voiced man had many listeners among those who, like Frederick, were to be left on the steamer, and of course all were greedy after words of hope.

"Oh, yes—we'll all do our best in that respect, of course," returned Fred. "I do not think any of us are going to die of fright."

"I don't know about that. I don't know. I think some of them will; but not you, my boy, not you."

"Is he your son?" asked a pale bystander.

"Oh, no—son of a friend—an intimate friend, I may say, and one of the richest men in the country. I should say, now," continued the speculator, looking round at the crowd, "that the man who renders him an essential service at such a time as this will make his fortune by it."

"All a mistake, my friend," replied Fred, quickly. "My father is insolvent."

"Insolvent! Lord Rashleigh insolvent! Impossible, young man! You do him great injustice."

Fred smiled at this complication of blunders, and he disavowed both the title and fortune of his father, but he scarcely got a hearing, and Argyle went on, out-speaking everybody and attracting numerous auditors.

"Then we may not be so far from shore as the captain thinks, and, besides, there's the other packet, too, she may come to your relief if we are not off the track, and if she hasn't passed us in the night, and if she sees our signals."

"Too many 'ifs' there, squire," cried a voice.

"She may come, though; in fact, I rather think she will. They usually pass each other somewhere about here. She may have been delayed. Probably was by this storm. It's best to look on the bright side of things, my friends."

"If I am not out of my reckoning we have passed the other boat, or she has passed us fifty miles back, and before our accident," said a red-shirted fireman.

"There's no use talking about that, and encouraging people to false hopes. I think we've as good a right to go in the boats as the rest of 'em for all that's come and gone yet, and I don't believe in staying here and being drowned like rats."

Some cried "Shame" to this, and others responded with a "That's so!" but although there were a few fierce and menacing faces there seemed no prospect of forcible opposition to the plan of the committee, which was now rapidly being carried out.

It was too apparent that a general rush for the boats would result in good to no one, and would be destroying the only means of escape for a few.

"You have had your chance, gentlemen, and I took mine with you, although I am fifty-nine years and six months old, and might have escaped the risk," said Argyle.

"So you did—so you did," replied a voice. "You're all right. You're a trump, any way."

"Thank you; and now what I'm going to say is this. It has all been fair; I might have been in your shoes, and some of you in mine, in which case I should have submitted as you very well know. I think you are going to do the same handsomely, but, if not, let me warn you that any resistance will be in vain. Eight of the committee are armed, and have pledged themselves to each other to shoot down every man who attempts to enter the boats without having the right to do so."

"Perhaps some of us are armed too," said one.

"Perhaps you are; but there are enough honest and honourable men on your own side—those who are not to go I mean—to disarm you, and pitch you overboard at the first sign of violence on your part."

"So there are—so there are!" replied several voices; and one added: "We ain't going to have any nonsense, nor any child's play about this. Everything has been done on the square, and even if we should undo it it wouldn't help us. The boats would

all be swamped in a jiffy if everybody should crowd into them that wants to."

"Come, my daughter," said Mr. Argyle, "it is time to go; they are already getting into the boats."

Frederick and Ada had already made their adieux with great good sense and good feeling—not indeed like lovers, but far more like brother and sister; for the awfulness of the hour did not admit of indulgence in romantic sentiment if either of them had been so disposed.

"It is impossible that I should ever forget your kindness in this trying hour," Ada had said; "and now if you would but take this life-preserver—although you have one—it might add something to your security, and could detract nothing from mine. If the boats keep right side up I shall not need it; and if they do not I am sure nothing will save me."

"You are mistaken, Ada," Frederick replied; "your father's strong arm, aided by this, would keep you up until the capsized boat was righted, and thus it might upset a dozen times without a fatal result. Keep up your courage; I think your prospect of escape is really very good indeed."

"And yours?"

"Is by no means desperate; yet we cannot foretell results. Heaven's will is to be done, and—and if I should perish you will bear my dearest love to my parents, and sister, and brother, and say that my last thoughts were of them."

"I will—I will!"

"Take back these jewels—they will be far safer with you; and take this—a parting gift for David."

He gave her his watch as he spoke, and Ada, accepting it, replied, with faltering voice:

"Pray keep up courage, and hold out to the last. I am sure if we reach shore my father will spare no pains or money to send help—to you—and all. Have some signal flying if possible from your little raft, if you should be obliged to resort to it—something that may be seen from afar. There will be good glasses searching. Never despair. I shall pray for you every minute, and for all whom we leave in this great strait."

"Come, Ada, come! don't frighten Mr. Rashleigh with your girlish fears. Good-bye, Fred! A stout heart is the word, and a firm trust in Him who rules the storm."

"That's it, sir—I am glad to hear you say it. All right!" and the young man shook hands with his friends without much trepidation. "I shall follow to see you embark," he added; "but as I shall have to drag my settee with me, in order to retain possession of it, it will take some time to get there."

There was a better supply of floating material now in proportion to the number who needed it, since the boats were to take so many of the people, and as everybody could obtain some kind of a support, sufficient to keep them above the water, some singly and some in parties of two or more, Rashleigh, who claimed proprietorship of the wooden settee, had thought it right to allow only one person to share it with him.

He had admitted Mr. Shelburn to this privilege, and together they carried their cumbersome load through the moving crowd as near as possible to that part of the vessel whence the swinging boats were to be lowered into the boisterous sea.

This operation was of course attended with great danger, as the violence of the waves threatened to dash the little craft against the sides of the steamer, either crushing or capsizing them at the very moment of touching the water.

Some shrank back appalled, and refused to go; many women screamed, and some fainted and were carried unconscious in the arms of their friends into the boats, and in the confusion of such an embarkation a few slipped in who were not entitled to go, churning afterwards, when challenged with the fraud, that they had bought the right of others, who had backed out.

But by great skill and good management of the officers, all four of the little vessels were successfully launched, and got clear of the wreck; and although parts of them seemed at times to go under, and although great waves dashed over them, strong arms kept their bows towards the coming billows, over which they rose, cork-like, and they were never once allowed to settle into the dreadful "troughs" which seemed gaping to engulf them.

When the first fearful crisis was over farewell shouts and cries were interchanged, and a hundred fluttering kerchiefs and waving hats prolonged the sad adieux of parting friends, who had little hope of ever meeting again on earth, however boldly they had kept up the pretence to each other, and tried to hide their mutual despair.

Rashleigh watched Ada as long as he could, and when she was no longer discernible he watched the boat she was in until he could not even make sure of that, but inasmuch as all the little fleet, though violently tossed, kept right side up and made a steady though slow progress westward, his hopes of their reaching the shore in safety were much increased.

But while he was absorbed in these contemplations he was recalled by Mr. Shelburn to the necessity of making some farther provisions for their own safety. There began to be indications that the wreck would not float as long as had been hoped, and it was by many considered necessary to be free from her before the final plunge took place, lest she should carry everything and everybody with her into the vortex which she was sure to make.

Some who had very firm and well-guarded floats were already preparing to launch them, while others contended that there would be no sudden descent of the steamer into the watery abyss, but that she would continue to settle gradually, as she was then doing, and they resolved to cling to her highest parts as long as they could keep a foothold on them, and only trust themselves to their feeble support when she disappeared entirely from beneath them.

"If we go down we shall come up again," they said; "better so than to soak and shiver in the water an hour or two sooner than necessary."

Rashleigh's views accorded with these, and he proceeded, with his comrade's aid, to remove the settee to the upper deck, where many were despairingly awaiting their doom, and others were looking eagerly at all quarters of the horizon for signs of coming help.

Some sanguine gazers thought they saw a sail, ever and anon, until the dear illusion changed to a wreath of mist, or to the white wings of a predatory gull, rising from the water, and gallily sweeping in airy circles above it, as if in mockery of the hopes it had created.

It was a time for the study of character if any one had been composed enough for contemplation, for among the large number of people who remained on the wreck there were men of all classes and all varieties of temperament and disposition.

Of the committee men only three had gone in the boats besides Mr. Rolfe and Mr. Annesley—who were privileged by age—and the fact that half of these men drew an unfavourable lot, and with one exception submitted to it uncomplainingly, went far towards convincing all of the entire fairness of the proceedings which they had originated and carried out.

The women had all gone but three, two of whom had held back in terror, resisting all entreaties to enter the boats, then after seeing them safely launched upon the boisterous waves and receding from the

sinking steamer had held out pleading hands and piteously entreated for their return, but in vain.

The third, a handsome lady, of calm demeanour, in middle life, had elected to stay with her son, a young man of about nineteen years, who was among the unhoused, and nothing that the distressed youth or her other fellow passengers could urge caused her to waver for a moment in her determination.

"It is Heaven's doing, my son," she had said, "we will go to it together if such is its will."

"But, mother—mother—it has provided you a way of escape—"

"No, my son. It cannot be meant for me, or else you would have been included in it. It knows all things. It knows that I would not leave you."

Seeing her thus resolute, one of the committee who had witnessed the scene proposed to the captain that an exception be made in favour of the young man, and that he be admitted with his mother to one of the boats.

"Certainly not!" that officer replied. "There are at least a score of men now who stand ready to oppose our action. Shall we give them an excuse by infringing our own rules?"

So they stayed together, nor did anything in the mother's demeanour indicate that she regretted her choice. Nay, she seemed more relieved when the boats had gone, and she could no longer be importuned.

Her son had secured a few planks, part of the flooring of the lower deck, which had been torn up with great difficulty by some of the passengers, and, with these fastened together in a triangular shape he had formed a little raft, which gave promise of sustaining them if they could keep upon it.

Rashleigh and Shelburn lent their assistance to make it more secure by the addition of some cabin doors torn from their hinges, and nailed across the open part in the centre, and by tying some looped ropes around the boards to cling to, and their kindly efforts were abundantly rewarded by the gratitude of both mother and son.

"We will keep near you if we can," said Fred, cheerily, to the lady. "Perhaps we can render you some assistance. I am a good swimmer, and I suppose your son is also—"

"Alas! No! He cannot swim."

"No matter. You have good life-preservers, and if either of you get washed off, why I'll come and help you on again. Only do not get frightened."

The mother smiled.

"I think you must allow us to be frightened a little under these circumstances," she said. "But you are very noble and good, and have given us new hope and courage. At such an hour, when selfishness is the rule, it is gratifying to find so noble an exception."

"You have set us all the grandest example, madame," replied Rashleigh. "Such deeds awaken sympathy and provoke emulation."

There was no abatement of the waves, but as the vessel settled in the water it rocked less violently, and some, deceived by this quiet, even hoped that the danger was diminishing, but this was a fallacy which they could not long entertain.

The committee-men who remained on the boat were still looked to as leaders, and their advice and opinions were sought after by many, although they were worth no more than those of any intelligent person on the wreck.

There was a pragmatical attorney among these men, a man who had been conspicuous before the disaster as a wordy, windy politician. He had opposed the action of a majority of the committee, and was full of substitutes for all their plans. He had objected to giving the deck passengers any chance for places in the boats, and insisted on confining the competition to cabin passengers. He had objected to the privilege accorded to men over sixty years old. He had objected to the mode of deciding who were to go; and, in fact, he had objected to everything, and had been over-ruled on all points by more just and humane men.

Then to his dismay he had drawn a blank in the great lottery, and he almost foamed with wrath to see some deck passengers, and even waiters, among the chosen band from which he, Mr. Clarke, was excluded.

During the interval between the drawing and the departure of the boats he had consorted with Higg and his coterie, and, it was believed, had attempted to organize resistance to the action of the committee, but if so he had failed in his dishonourable efforts for want of sufficient evil material to work upon.

He had afterwards collapsed into a meek and frightened-looking man, for, his lofty bearing being gone, he seemed really to have diminished in size. And he spent most of his time in adding to and strengthening his float (the nucleus of which was three low-backed arm-chairs fastened together), and in inquiring very eagerly of some men who could swim—for he could not—how it was done, and mak-

ing them go through the motions for his instruction.

There was also a clergyman on the wreck, who seemed—to his credit be it said—forgetful of himself, and intent on his duty to those around him. He appeared entirely composed and resigned, and his spiritual counsels and example brought not a few others into a similarly happy frame of mind.

At the request of many of his imperilled companions he also made a prayer, which was very fervent and very impressive, and during the delivery of which, on the open deck, all crowded nearer to him to catch the solemn utterances which were with difficulty made audible above the whistling wind and the moaning waves.

It was a scene long to be remembered—if, alas! there were to be any survivors of that impending disaster, which all signs now betokened to be at hand.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,  
Alone on a wide, wide sea. *Coleridge.*

THE small boats were in the meantime progressing slowly shoreward, violently tossed, at times half submerged, and careening so far that it seemed impossible that they should ever "right," or that anything could prevent expiring.

The danger was so great that many of the passengers heartily wished themselves back on the wreck, and nothing was farther now from the ideas of any of them than any thought of gratulation on the privilege which they had a short time before so highly valued, and so gladly embraced.

No signs of land became visible, and whether they were five, or ten, or fifty miles from the shore which they were seeking it was not possible to tell.

They might even be far nearer the eastern coast than the western for aught that they positively knew, and every stroke of the oars might be carrying them farther away from the goal they sought to attain.

Mr. Argyle and his daughter were in the boat which carried Captain Chrome, and that officer had a good sea-glass, which he kept in almost constant use looking for the shore, looking for sails, and looking back at the wreck, which, as seen by the naked eye, had diminished to a black, log-like object on the water, sluggishly rising and falling with its undulations.

"She floats yet," he said, after one of those surveys, "and I can still see people moving upon her decks. I do not think anybody has quitted her yet."

"What chance is there for them, captain?" asked Mr. Rolfe.

"Chance? Not any—not any?" was the answer, in a low voice. "Nothing short of a miracle can save a soul of them."

Ada heard this opinion with a sinking heart. She sat near her father in the stern of the boat, with little Clara Annesley clasped in her arms, but their own case seemed to her so little better than her distress could not be greatly increased.

Her father, with his usual hopeful temperament, combated the captain's views, and said he considered the position of their late companions very far from desperate. Suddenly he exclaimed:

"Hallo! What's the matter with that boat? She's going over! Bad management there! See! See!"

Ay, no need to call attention to the foundering boat. A score of wailing voices resound through the air, with the hoarse shouts of officers and men, then the oval bottom of the boat is seen uppermost, with about a dozen people clinging desperately to it, while as many more are struggling in the water, most of them upborne by life-preservers and floating like corks upon the billows.

The capsized vessel was perhaps twenty or thirty yards behind the captain's boat, and her other consorts were not much farther off, one in the rear and another on one side.

All came to her relief as fast as possible, not without increased peril to themselves, which was still more augmented when many of the terrified swimmers and stragglers in the water came clinging to the sides of the other boats imploring to be taken in.

These appeals of course could not be disregarded, and the sufferers were hauled in as fast as they came, though some of them being strong men and finding there was to be an attempt to "right" the boat afterwards, swam back to aid in that effort, for the danger of overloading the boats was well understood by all.

Fortunately there had been but few women and no children in the overturned vessel, but there were several men without life-preservers, of whom one had sunk while others were battling manfully for life.

Those who had clambered on the inverted keel



were next rescued, or all at least who were incompetent to assist in bringing the boat to an upright position, then Captain Chrome called for volunteers to follow him into the water, reminding them that their lives all depended on their courage at this critical moment.

Argyle was instantly at his side heedless of the cries of Ada, and the two men went over the side together and were quickly followed by many others, all of whom being buoyed up by life-preservers went resolutely and hopefully to their task.

But the violence of the sea defeated all their efforts, for although the vessel was righted with immense labour, and was held upright by many hands, nothing could be done towards emptying it of water.

As fast as it could be bailed the great waves filled it again, and kept it full, and it lay so low that no expedient could prevent this in-pouring deluge, and the baffled men soon knew that their toil was in vain.

In a calm or even in a moderate sea they could have accomplished their purpose, but nothing was more certain than that they were here uselessly exhausting their strength. When this fact became fully apparent Captain Chrome was the first to announce it, and to bid the men return to the boats, enjoining upon them the utmost care in climbing in, reminding all that their peril, which was imminent enough before, was now vastly increased.

Yet they scarcely needed this reminder in regard to so patent a fact. Drenched and shivering they regained their places with difficulty, but a sort of sullen despair seemed to have seized upon most of them, and some complained angrily because the occupants of the last boat had been taken in at such a deadly risk to the others.

"They had their chance—and lost it," said one. "Must we all perish to save them? Suppose another boat should upset. We certainly could do nothing for them. We could not take them in."

"Very true," replied another, solemnly, "but the next that goes may be our own. What then? Life is dear to all. No one is willing to give it up a moment sooner than necessary."

The consternation was very general, and all foresaw that another accident like the last would probably be fatal to the whole party, for drowning men would fight for admission to the boats which still floated, and who could have the heart forcibly to resist their entrance and push them back into the watery abyss?

Under these circumstances the nearly disheartened captain ordered, or rather advised, the oarsmen—for his authority to command was no longer recognized—that they should not exhaust their strength by any attempt at progress while the sea continued so rough, but that they should merely keep the boats headed across the waves and avoid getting caught in a trough or gutter.

"No matter which way we go, or how far, or how little, let your aim be only to keep from filling and upsetting. After it becomes calmer it will be time enough to attempt to make progress. A few miles more or less now can make little difference, and these waves cannot always roll like this."

This advice was followed. The utmost vigilance was exercised by all, and every attention was given to "trimming ship" by changing positions at critical moments, and now and then, when nothing else would apparently have saved the boats, some of the boldest men leaped overboard on the elevated side, and, clinging to it, restored the equilibrium.

Thus half the day wore away. The wreck of the steamer had long been lost sight of, but whether it had disappeared beneath the waves or they had only lost its bearings no one knew or took much pains to ascertain.

No one but Argyle, who continued to be hopeful both for themselves and those they had left behind, and his cheery voice and manner infused new life and courage into many a sinking heart.

Fortunately there was yet no lack of provisions. The steamer's larder had been well provided for the voyage, and the food had been brought up and distributed before the boats started, among all the passengers and crew, who carried their rations as best they could, either in their pockets or in parcels in their hands.

Argyle continued to talk a great deal, whatever else he was doing, and listeners were not wanting, for the sound of a cheerful voice without a quiver in it was welcome amid so many wails and groans and semi-shrieks—welcome even to those who contributed most to the dismal chorus of the hour.

He took his turn regularly at rowing and at bailing—for he shirked no duty and was foremost in all—but whether he was doing these things, or resting beside Ada, or assisting to turn the boat and clambering with others over the side to avert the threatened upsetting—he talked incessantly, loudly,

cheerily—sometimes jocosely; and many a pallid face looked wonderingly into his and caught his infectious hope.

Captain Chrome acknowledged his valuable services again and again, and at one time said to him, pointing the compliment by an expressive look:

"I begin to think we shall get through safely, sir. We certainly 'carry Cassar.'"

"Don't know—don't know," was the quick response. "Perhaps you carry Jonah."

Doubtless it was right that such a man, who had long sustained the despairing hearts of his fellow-voyagers, should be the first to discover for them the signs of a well-grounded hope of safety.

About noon the clouds, which had long been brightening, began to break away, and the sun came out, dispelling the distant haze or lighting a pathway for vision through it.

"Land ahead! Land ahead! Land ahead!" shouted Argyle, with stentorian lungs—and "Land ahead!" came back in wild responses from the other boats, while cheer rose on cheer, and yet again and again, and again, until the glad voices failed from exhaustion, and waving hats and kerchiefs, and tender, loving embraces, and bended knees and streaming eyes upraised to Heaven, attested the unutterable joy and gratitude of the long-imperilled travellers on whom the hope of safety had so suddenly dawned.

But it was miles distant. It might be a wilderness—it might even be a coast infested by hostile savages, ready to meet them with banded bows or more deadly fire-arms—but there it was—the earth—the solid earth—grass-covered and tree-crowned, outstretched for many a mile before their eager eyes, which greedily drank in the joyous sight.

Never before had the ground—the bare, homely ground—looked so beautiful to them. Could they but reach it and feel that it upheld them, that it did not roll and toss beneath their feet—that no watery grave gaped to engulf them, their bliss would indeed be complete. Ah! it requires some experience of danger and suffering to make us appreciate the common blessings of life—which are often thanklessly overlooked for the very reason which should make them most valued, because they are so common, so nearly universal.

The greatest care was still needed, for there was danger that the excitement of this great joy would produce some indiscretion which would result in wrecking them in the very sight of shore.

They were no longer content to remain stationary, and the boats were urged forward with moderate speed, but as every man was now hopeful and vigilant, and ready to plunge into the water if necessary to prevent a disaster, the peril rapidly diminished.

Their new hope did not deceive them. There began to be some abatement in the violence of the wind and waves, slight, yet plainly perceptible, and after an hour and a half of laborious rowing they drew near the shore, and ere the keels yet grated upon the pebbly beach many leaped out of the boats into water waist-deep, and rushed to land, eager to touch it and cling to it, and make sure that it was no illusion or mocking dream.

Some danced with joy, some knelt in hands upon the beach and offered up devoutest thanksgivings, some hugged each other in their transports, yet wept and moaned for those they had left behind upon the wreck.

The coast on which they had landed was utterly unknown to them, and although the captain had constantly used his glass on approaching the shore he had failed to discover any landmarks familiar to him.

He might be very far out of his reckoning—indeed it would not be surprising if he were, considering how long the wrecked steamer had drifted, and how aimlessly the boats had been guided for several hours, with no other view than to keep them "across the waves."

Then arose the questions in the minds of Argyle and Captain Chrome—could volunteers be found to return in search of the wreck or its survivors? and would the imperilled party on shore consent to risk the loss of the boats in so hopeless an undertaking?

Should eighty-three lives be endangered for the faint chance of saving a few more?

Argyle greatly feared that such views would prevent all attempts at rescue. He consulted with Captain Chrome and found him perplexed with the same problem.

He himself was willing to risk everything in the cause of humanity, but he doubted his crew and his passengers.

"Those only who have left relations on the wreck will urge or consent to a return of the boats, and probably not all of them. The selfishness of some people when in extreme danger is astonishing. Their love of life, or their fear of death, outweighs every other consideration."

"I know it. I've seen it."

"Then, unfortunately, we broke the steamer's compass in hastily removing it to one of the boats, and we might have great difficulty in finding this spot again if we go out of sight of land. This is generally known."

"But you are willing to go?"

"I am—I am only calculating the chances of opposition from others."

"Let the men eat and drink and warm themselves," replied Argyle. "That will put new life into them. In the meantime the waves are subsiding."

All who were anxious on the subject, and especially the women, came to the captain or to Argyle with their inquiries and petitions, and, being assured that they would do all that could be done, they patiently endured the necessary delay.

Of the rescued party fifteen were women and eleven children. Of the former but seven were cultivated persons, the remainder of the females being the wives of the poorer class, who when they travelled on steamboats went cheaply as deck passengers.

Most of the children also belonged to this class—all indeed except Clara Annesley, the crippled boy, and two infants.

Besides these there were fifty-eight men in the boats when they left the steamer, one of whom, as we have seen, was drowned by the way, but this fact was not ascertained with certainty until the voyagers reached the shore, for the unfortunate man had no friend with him specially interested in his fate, although it was afterwards learned that he left a brother on the wreck to whom he had given his life-preserver. Much sympathy was excited on his behalf.

The party on shore therefore consisted of eighty-three souls, and as they had been provided with no more food than would suffice for a meal or two at farthest, most of which was already consumed, starvation was among the evils that threatened them.

That the majority of a party so situated would object to the withdrawal of the boats on such slight hope of effecting any good, and might forcibly resist it, seemed probable enough.

But Captain Chrome made the proposition by calling for volunteers, and Argyle first responded to the call himself, then made a stirring speech in favour of it, which quickly brought half a dozen others to his side.

The storm was fast abating, he said, and at the worst the boats would be safe enough with only four oarsmen and a pilot in each, nor, unfortunately, was it likely that this load would be much increased on their return.

To pick up a few survivors of the disaster was the extent of their hopes, and if they saved but one life their labours would still be well rewarded.

Let them imagine, he said, a single helpless individual floating in that vast expanse of water, and tossed on its billows, with only some frail support beneath him, looking anxiously—oh, how anxiously—in every direction for approaching help.

Could they refuse it to him for the slight risk which they were called upon to take, or for any mere inconvenience however great?

"We don't think he is there," said one, gruffly. "Pretty sure on't—and we've got our hands mighty full to take care of ourselves here without going Don Quixoting over the sea looking for people who have been drowned these six hours, I can tell you that. The boats oughtn't to go neither."

"The boats will go," replied the captain, quietly.

"They will, eh? I don't know about that. Perhaps it won't be just as you say. You're done about enough, you have. You've lost your steamboat, drowned a hundred of your passengers, and landed the rest of us in a barren wilderness without anything to eat. And now you are going away with the boats, are you? We'll see about that. I rather think you ain't captain here. We'll see. Our lives are worth something."

The speaker was a stout, red-faced man, dressed in gray, with a small leathern cap on the side of his head, and a pipe in his hand, which he held out at arm's length and made some defiant gestures with as he spoke.

He was a cattle-dealer, and looked not unlike a cross ox—certainly not more humane.

Still his speech met considerable approval, and Captain Chrome, who was either too indignant to reply or thought it best to let others speak for him, remained silent.

"You blame the captain most wrongfully," answered Mr. Rolfe. "It was not his fault that the shaft broke, and that was the cause of all our troubles. We all know he has done everything in his power since that."

"Oh, you are one of his committee."

"Yes, I am—and if it hadn't been for his committee, as you call them, and for the captain's prudent counsels, you wouldn't have been here to raise your voice against going to help your fellow creatures in their utmost need. You'd have been where they are."

"What better shall we be off here if you take the bats away? We've nothing to eat, or shan't have in a few hours. I'm hungry now."

"There's game in these woods—"

"We've got nothing to shoot with if there is game."

"And there's fish in the sea—no end of them."

"Well, you just dive down and catch a few for us, will you, seel'n we haven't got no hooks nor lines, nor nets, and here are more than eighty mouths to be filled."

"And one to be shut up if it can't talk sense and humanity," interposed Argyle, angrily. "My friends, we won't argue this matter—we'll put it to vote, and see how many Christians there are here and how many heathens, who will let a possible danger to themselves outweigh a certain calamity to their neighbours."

"Self-preservation is the first law of nature," shouted the cattle-dealer.

"It's the only law with some people, I believe," returned the speculator.

The objector's adherents were by this time pretty numerous, as Argyle and his friends could not fail to see, and there were some better men among them than their spokesman who had perhaps hesitated to avow their views until they saw their party strengthening.

One of these, a short, compact man, dressed in black, who was said to be a lawyer, now spoke very mildly:

"Gentlemen," he said, "before this question is put to vote, allow me to remind you that we are probably on a desert island—at least no one knows to the contrary, and even the captain admits its possibility, and says that he did not expect to find the main-land so near."

"Well?"

"Then, gentlemen of the Ju——. Ah, gentlemen, I should say, allow me to remind you farther—"

"Don't be so perillous," cried a coarse voice. "Say what you've got to say, and make an end of it. There's no time to be wasted."

"Very well—what I have farther to say is simply this: If we are on an island, and our boats be lost, I will probably be fatal to our whole party. The captain proposes to go to the scene of the wreck, probably twenty miles from here, and very far out of sight of land. At the best it must be dark before he gets there, and midnight before he can return. He has no compass. It will be too cloudy to steer by the stars, and the chances are that he will never find us again. How can he?"

This speech frightened many, but Argyle instantly replied:

"Now, gentlemen, allow me to remind you of something. There is a Heaven above us, and mercy will be shown to him who shows it to his fellow man. Let those who are in favour of attempting to save our friends go to the right."

"Are the ladies to vote?" asked one.

"Yes"—"No"—"Yes"—a dozen voices responded.

"If they vote they'll vote against us," said the cattle man. "They're allers weak in judgment, women are."

"And strong in goodness," answered Argyle. Their right to vote is indisputable. They risk as much as any of you."

The women voted, and with the exception of two deck passengers' wives, who were almost forcibly held back by their husbands, they went to the right, making a clear majority of a dozen or more for the attempted rescue.

Still some were clamorous against the measure by which it had been carried, and a compromise was finally effected by which it was agreed that one boat should be left with the party on shore. This would partly provide for the worst contingencies, and there was little hope that enough survivors of the wreck would be found to fill two boats.

The remaining carsmen were quickly found; and, indeed, there were enough volunteers to have permitted Mr. Argyle to withdraw and remain with his daughter if he had chosen to do so. But he preferred to go, fearing that the search would not be sufficiently thorough without him.

(To be continued.)

**THE BRIGHTON AQUARIUM.**—The post of manager of the aquarium is to be held by Mr. J. K. Lord, the naturalist, who has had large experience in all matters relating to sea fisheries, and intends carrying on experiments regarding the habits of various fish of which we at present know little or nothing, and which for years past have been a bone of contention among some of our celebrated naturalists.

**DEATH OF THE GODDESS OF LIBERTY.**—A widow named Genoit, reported to be the stoutest woman in Paris, has just died; she weighed 514lb.,

was as nearly round as possible, and kept a pork-butcher's shop in the Rue aux Ours. For the last ten years she had never quitted the counter except for the purpose of retiring to rest. In 1848 she was a slender nymph, and represented the Goddess of Liberty when the sovereign people entered the Tuileries.

## MYSTERY OF THE HAUNTED GRANGE.

### CHAPTER XXXI.

SIR VANE CHARTERIS lingered in the Syrian village long enough to perform his last duties to his friend. The body was embalmed and transported to England; and perhaps among all who stood bareheaded around, whilst the great vault down at Montalien opened to receive another inmate, Guy Earls court was the only mourner at heart.

It had not been the way of father or son to speak of it, or even much to think it, but in their secret hearts they had loved each other wonderfully well.

Francis, the new Lord Montalien, looked as he always did, the model of all filial virtues and quiet grief; but the dark spirit within him exulted. His was the power now and the glory—he, not the dead man's favourite, reigned in Montalien.

He listened with the same expression of subdued sorrow when the will was read, and knew that his father had not left him one memento of fatherly regard. All had gone to Guy—a trifle, perhaps, but all.

He grasped his brother's hand when they were alone together, and looked at him with glistening eyes.

"Guy, old fellow," he said, "thirteen thousand are not much to you with your habits and tastes, but when you are up a tree call upon me without fear. The income of Montalien is a noble one, and I shall share it as a brother should. Stint yourself in no way—your debts shall be paid."

Guy lifted his dark eyebrows, and pulled his moustache in dense bewilderment.

"Has Frank gone mad, I wonder?" he thought; "he pay my debts! Why, the selfish beggar would not give a sou to keep me from starving! What the deuce does he mean by gushing in this way!" But aloud he had answered:

"Thanks, very much; you're not half a bad fellow, Frank!" and had straightway proceeded to squander his legacy, which he managed very completely to do in a year.

Sir Vane Charteris made an end of his Eastern tour, and, returning home by Paris, proceeded to call upon his ward.

He had informed Miss Lisle by letter of the change, and the young lady had shed some very sincere tears over the news, a few for Lord Montalien, whom she had liked, a few for herself, that she should be the ward of Sir Vane Charteris, whom she disliked with a heartiness which characterized all this young person's likes and dislikes.

The baronet called upon her one July day—the July preceding the September of which I have written—and there descended to the convent parlour a tall, slim young lady, in a gray dress, with a pale face, and large, bright eyes. She gave her hand rather coldly to her guardian, and listened whilst he unfolded his plans for her.

She was eighteen now, and the time for leaving school had come. Early in October his town house would be in order, and his sister and daughter ready to receive and welcome her. It was his wish she should enter society at once; her Grace the Duchess of Clanronald had offered to present her at Court.

Pending the ides of October would Paulina mind remaining quietly where she was?

"Yes," Miss Lisle answered, "decidedly she would mind it. She had no notion of spending the long midsummer vacation in the convent. She had promised her friend, Mademoiselle Virginia Dupont, to spend August and September in the fraternal mansion at Versailles. And she was quite willing to make her *début* in society immediately—delighted indeed. If Sir Vane Charteris chose to come for her about the middle of October she would be ready to go to England.

The interview ended, and the baronet had obtained what he desired, an inkling into the character of the heiress.

She had a will of her own—that was clear, and a very strong fancy for having her own way. It would require all the tact he possessed and all his strength of mind to come off victor in a battle with her.

"She shall marry in her first season," he thought, "and a man of my choosing. Robert Lisle will never dare return to England; and Olivia's life will soon end in her mad-house. At her death her fortune becomes Maud's, for who is there to say she ever had an elder daughter?"

So while Miss Lisle was enjoying herself very

much in her friend's home there were several people across the Channel to whom she was an object of great interest.

There was Sir Vane Charteris busily preparing his town house, in the aristocratic neighbourhood of Berkeley Square, for her reception—Lord Montalien, who had made up his mind entirely to his own satisfaction to marry her—and the spendthrift and prodigal Guy, who was strongly recommended to do the same. His adviser was an old maiden aunt of his father's, from whom he had expectations, who had already paid his debts half a dozen times, and the thought of whose prospective legacy alone kept the Jews from swooping down upon him.

"You are the most reckless, the most wickedly extravagant man in the Guards," this ancient grand-aunt said to him in a passion; "and I will pay your debts no more, sir—do you understand? Gambling, and drinking, and horse-racing are bad enough, Heaven knows, but let there come a whisper of anything worse to my ears and I will disinherit you, and give everything to Frank—do you understand?"

"There is no mistaking your meaning, my dear aunt," Guy answered, with imperturbable good temper. "I dare say you will eventually; I'm an unlucky beggar generally, and it will only be of a piece with the rest if you do disinherit me. It's a pity for Frank's sake I don't go to the bad altogether."

"You have gone there, sir!" cried old Miss Earls court. "You're a disgrace to your name and family, sir. Why don't you get married?—answer me that, and change your life, and leave the army, and become a decent member of society?"

Guy looked at her with a face of unfeigned horror.

"Get married! Heaven forbid! My dear aunt, I don't like to doubt your sanity, but to propose marriage to a man of my age—three-and-twenty, odd! No, it is not so desperate as that, while there is prussic acid enough left in the chemist's to enable me to glide out of life!"

Miss Earls court struck her stick vehemently on the ground, looking very much like a venerable witch.

"Lieutenant Earls court, I say you shall marry, and at once! There is this girl, who was your father's ward—she is rich—she is handsome. I say you shall marry her!"

"Shall I?" murmured Guy, helplessly.

"She is coming home next month. I asked Frank, and he told me, and you shall make her fall in love with you, and marry you. You are handsome, one of the very handsomest young men I ever saw, and a favourite with all the women. I don't go into society, but I hear. I tell you, sir, you shall marry this Paulina Lisle, or I will disinherit you!"

"But, my dear madame—"

"Not a word, not a syllable, sir! It is your last chance before you become altogether disreputable. I have paid your debts for the last time, and my money shall never go to be squandered like water. Marry this young woman with her eighty thousand pounds, and you shall have every farthing I possess. Don't tell me!—a man with such a face, such a tongue, and such elegant insolence of manner as yours, can always secure the affections of women! Now go!" and her stick pointed to the door; "don't let me see your wicked, spendthrift face again until you come to announce this heiress as your affianced wife!"

Away along the dreariest part of the Essex coast there stood, and stands still, a lonely old manor-house, closed in from the outer world by funeral trees, and called "The Firs." It was the country house of Sir Vane Charteris, and had never been visited by him in the past twenty years.

A gloomy and gruesome place it was, five miles from the nearest country neighbour, a squalid fishing village lying below, the long waves for ever breaking upon the shingly shore, and the gaunt, dark firs smothering it all around.

The "Moated Grange" could hardly have been a more lonesome and eerie dwelling, nor could "Mariana" have bewailed her hard lot in being shut up there much more bitterly than did the mistress of "The Firs," the Widow Galbraith.

Mrs. Eleanor Galbraith was the only sister of Sir Vane Charteris, and had spent the last nineteen years of her widowhood doing penance at "The Firs." When one-and-twenty she had thrown herself away upon a subaltern in the 60th Highlanders, which penniless young officer, dying within two years, left his widow to the cold charity of her only brother.

Sir Vane had bitterly opposed the imprudent match; now he comforted Mrs. Galbraith in her weeds and widowhood by that cynical aphorism—as she had made her bed so she must lie. He was shortly about to contract a matrimonial alliance with the wealthy and beautiful Miss Olivia Lyndith; and a sister in weeds was an addition he did not at all desire in his nuptial establishment.



There was "The Firs" if she liked. "The Firs" stood in need of a mistress to keep it from falling into decay. He never meant to go near it himself—it's dismalness always gave him the horrors. If Mrs. Galbraith chose to go and reside at "The Firs" she was entirely welcome, if not—

Mrs. Galbraith did choose, wrathfully, and had become socially extinct from that hour. Nineteen years had passed, and gray hairs had stolen into her raven locks, and crows'-feet impressed themselves under her eyes. She was forty-one years of age, and was a handsome likeness of her brother. She was tall and majestic of stature; she had two bright black eyes, that flashed under straight, thick, black brows; she had a large, well-shaped nose, a large mouth, a massive under-jaw, and brilliant white teeth.

"If Vane had but acted as a brother," Mrs. Galbraith was wont bitterly to think, "and allowed me to go with him and his wife to Vienna, or even permitted me a few seasons in London, I might have redeemed my first error, and married well. Handsome young widows are almost certain to marry well a second time, if they have the chance."

The years sped on, and she grew gray at "The Firs." Look at her as she sits at her solitary mid-day meal, with the hot September sunshine filling the long, dark, old-fashioned dining-room—a fine woman, most assuredly, in spite of the crows'-feet—a stout, handsome, middle-aged lady, with a clear brain and a firm will.

The rattling of wheels on the drive without reaches her ears—a most unusual sound. As she springs up and goes to the window she sees, to her ungovernable surprise, her brother, Sir Vane Charteris!

An instant more, and the old man who did duty as butler, gardener, and coachman, ushered in the lord of the manor.

"Vane!"

The baronet advanced with more cordiality than he had ever displayed towards her, and held out his hand.

"My dear Eleanor, I am glad to see you again." He drew her to him and kissed her brown cheek. "Yes, very glad, after so many years; and looking so well, too. What! luncheon already!"

He flung himself into a chair, and glanced at the substantially spread table.

"Dinner, Sir Vane Charteris! I dine at the hour at which people of your rank breakfast. One nearly forgets the usages of civilized life after nineteen years' solitude at 'The Firs.'"

"I hope not, Eleanor," answered Sir Vane, coolly, "as I desire you at once to return to my world, as you call it. I have come down to remove you from 'The Firs' to my town house."

Mrs. Galbraith gave a gasp.

At last!—what she had pined for, prayed for, sighed for, during nineteen years, had come!

"You have heard of my unfortunate domestic calamity?" pursued the baronet. "I allude to my unhappy wife's insanity. I had half resolved to sell the lease of the Merced Street house; but circumstances have occurred lately that have caused me to change my mind. I have been appointed guardian to a young lady, an heiress, whom I wish to present to society."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Galbraith, with her black eyes fixed on her brother's face. "I saw a brief paragraph in the newspapers concerning it. A Miss Paulina Lisle, formerly the ward of the late Lord Montalien—is it not?"

"The same; and a very handsome and charming young lady. I assure you, with eighty thousand pounds as her fortune. She will be presented next season by the Duchess of Clanronald, and make her *début*, with yourself for chaperone. Meantime, she comes from France in a month, and will go out a great deal no doubt, in a quiet way, this autumn and winter. The Christmas and hunting season we are to spend at Montalien Priory. My town house must be set in order at once, and you shall preside in my wife's place. Maud shall leave school, and have a governess."

"You give yourselves considerable trouble for your new ward," said Mrs. Galbraith, who knew that giving himself trouble for anything or anybody was not her brother's weakness. "Who is this Paulina Lisle? One of the Sussex Lises?"

"No; I believe the father was of Scotch descent."

"She is an orphan, of course?"

"Oh, no—the father lives out in California, but not in the least likely to return to England. He was an old friend of Lord Montalien's, and entrusted his heiress to him, with the power to appoint a guardian in his stead in the event of his death. I have been appointed, and, trouble or not, I shall do my duty to this young lady."

"The mother is dead, I suppose?"

"Of course. Can you be ready to return to town with me to-morrow, Eleanor?"

"Quite ready," said Mrs. Galbraith; then, while Sir Vane went to his room, she finished her dinner, regarding her plate with a thoughtful frown.

"Vane has changed very greatly," she mused, "or he never would have burdened himself with a ward at all. Is he keeping something back, I wonder? Has he designs upon this Miss Lisle's fortune? Does he expect his wife to die and that this young heiress will marry him?"

The baronet and his sister returned to town early next day, and Mrs. Galbraith set to work at once with a zeal and energy that showed she had lost none of her sharp faculties during her nineteen years' exile from the world.

She saw to the refurnishing and repainting and rehanging of the house and rooms, to the plate, the linen, the liveries—everything.

Long before the middle of October arrived the house in Merced Street, Berkeley Square, was quite ready for the reception of Miss Paulina Lisle.

Sir Vane brought his daughter home, then started for France.

The baronet's daughter was in her sixteenth year now, small of stature, dark of skin, and with a pale, precocious little face. She had quite the air and conversation of a grown-up person, knew a deal of life and French literature, could play a little, sing a little, draw a little, and dance and talk a great deal. Her aunt and she fraternized at once, drove out in the park together, and speculated what manner of person this Miss Lisle might be now.

"Your father says she is very handsome, Maud," observed Mrs. Galbraith.

"Handsome! oh, dear, no, quite a plain young person, with great eyes, and sandy hair, and the rudest manners. Quite an uninformed, gawky country girl!"

Late in the evening of a dismal day in early October Sir Vane and his ward arrived. It had rained and blown heavily all day long. Miss Lisle had suffered agonies worse than death crossing the Channel, and was as pallid, and woo-begone an object as can be conceived. Mrs. Galbraith shrugged her broad shoulders as she looked at the wan, spiritless face.

"And you called her handsome, Vane," she said to her brother.

Sir Vane laughed grimly.

"Wait until to-morrow," was his oracular response as he too, in a used-up state, retired to his room.

Lord Montalien, who since the middle of the previous September, had spent the chief part of his time in town, chanced to be in the house. He was a frequent visitor. The house was pleasant, the wines and viands excellent, Mrs. Galbraith a capital hostess and a clever woman, and little Maud, in a year or two, would be marriageable. Her mother's fortune would be here, and should Miss Lisle prove obdurate to his suit, why, it might be as well to win the regards of Miss Charteris. To marry a rich wife he was resolved—at heart he was a very miser, and worshipped gold for gold's sake.

"A sickly, sallow, spiritless creature as ever I saw!" was Mrs. Galbraith's contemptuous verdict on her return to the drawing-room. "There will not be much credit in chaperoning her. I daresay she will marry—girls with eighty thousand pounds are pretty safe to go off—but half the men in London will certainly not lose their senses about her! And my brother told me she was pretty!"

"She was pretty," said Lord Montalien, "more than pretty, if I remember right, two years ago. Allan Fane, an artist friend of mine, he who married Di Hantoun, you know, nearly went mad about her when she was only a poor little, penniless country girl. Some girls do grow up plain, and I suppose she is one of them. We shall be treated to austere convent airs, no doubt, and have to listen to Monastery Bells and Vesper Hymns, whenever she sits down to the piano."

"Come to dinner to-morrow and see," was Mrs. Galbraith's response. And his lordship promised, and left the house.

He did not return to his own elegant bachelor's lodgings in Piccadilly, but drove away to Gilbert's Gardens, and spent the evening very agreeably in the society of a lady whom he called "Alice," and to whom he did not speak of the return of Paulina Lisle.

Lord Montalien, as a privileged friend of the family, came early to the house of Sir Vane Charteris the following evening. There was to be a dinner-party, but he was the first of the guests to arrive. Mrs. Galbraith, in crimson velvet, stately and majestic, received him in the winter drawing-room. Two young ladies were present, one in her simple school-room attire, for Maud did not yet appear in public, another, tall and slender, in blue silk, with violets in her shining, gold-brown hair. Lord Montalien approached her at once with outstretched hand.

"As I was the last to say farewell to Miss Paulina Lisle on her departure so let me be the first to welcome her back to England."

Miss Lisle turned round, and gave him her hand, scanning him with bright blue eyes.

"I beg your pardon, you were not the last to say farewell to me upon my departure from England," she retorted. "Your brother came after you, Mr. Earls court."

"Not Mr. Earls court now, my dear," smoothly insinuated Mrs. Galbraith. "Lord Montalien."

"Oh, yes! I beg your pardon again. The other name was the more familiar."

"Then call me by whatever is most familiar," with a long, tender glance, "as so old a friend should."

"So old a friend!" Miss Lisle pursed up her bright lips with the old saucy grace. "Let me see—we have met just three times in our lives before this moment. Now I shouldn't think three meetings would constitute such very old friendship, but, of course, your lordship knows best."

She walked away to a distant window, humming a French song.

Lord Montalien looked after her, then at Mrs. Galbraith.

"A sickly, sallow, spiritless creature," he said, quoting her own words of yesterday. "Mrs. Galbraith, you are one of the cleverest women I know, but don't you think you made ever so slight a mistake yesterday?"

The girl was looking superb. The slim form had grown taller and rather fuller, its willowy grace was perfect. The face, perhaps, was a trifle too pale and thin still, but the large, brilliant, sapphire eyes, the sparkling white teeth, the saucy, ever-dimpling smiles, and the aureole of bronze hair, would have lit any face into beauty. In her nineteenth year, enough of childhood yet lingered to give her a frank confidence, that rarely lasts through later years. The blue eyes looked you full, brightly, steadily in the face, the frank lips told you the truth, with all the elasticity of a child. A lovely girl, in her first youth, with a will and a spirit, and a temper, too, of her own, she was ready at a moment's notice to do battle for friends or with foes.

"A half-tamed filly, with a wicked light in the eyes," thought Lord Montalien. "My dear Mrs. Galbraith, I don't want to discourage you, but your spiritless *débutante* will give you as much trouble in the future as ever *débutants* gave chaperones. That young lady means to have her own way or know the reason why."

"Young ladies with eighty thousand pounds generally do have their own way," the lady answered. "Do you mean to enter the lists, my lord? The competition will be brisk. She is a handsome girl, despite yesterday's sea-sickness. Just the sort of girl men lose their heads for most readily. By the bye, she has been asking for your scapegrace brother."

Mrs. Galbraith rose to receive some new guest, and Lord Montalien approached the window, where Miss Lisle still stood gazing out at the twilight street. She glanced over her shoulder, and asked him a question before he could speak.

"My lord, how long is it since you were at Speck-haven?"

"A little over a week, Miss Lisle. You mean to visit it soon, I suppose? By the way, there is quite an old friend of yours stopping at Montalien."

"Indeed! Another old friend, like yourself, whom I have probably seen three times!"

"More than that, Miss Lisle. I allude to Allan Fane."

"Oh!" said Paulina, and laughed and blushed.

"Yes, I saw a good deal of Mr. Fane at one time. He wanted me to sit for a picture, you know. Mrs. Fane is there too, I suppose?"

"No, Mr. Fane is alone. Mrs. Fane is in Germany for her health, which is poor. They meet once or twice a year, I believe, and are always perfectly civil to each other, but, as a rule, they get on much more happily with two or three hundred leagues between them. Mrs. Fane grows old and sickly, and is notoriously jealous of her husband."

"Poor Mr. Fane! And your brother, my lord—is he, too, at Montalien?"

"You remember Guy, then? poor Guy!"

"Certainly I remember Guy. I saw a great deal more of him than I ever did of you; and two years are not such an eternity! Why poor Guy?"

"Because—because—you haven't heard then?"

"Lord Montalien, I only reached England late last night—how was I to hear anything? Nothing very dreadful has befallen your brother, I hope?"

"Your interest does him too much honour. He is quite unworthy of it."

"Why, please?"

"Because—my dear Miss Lisle, it is not a pleasant story for me to tell—for you to hear. Guy has gone to the bad, as they say, if you know what that means."

"I should think I did—it seems tolerably plain English. It means, I suppose, he has spent all his money and got into debt."

"It means that and more," Lord Montalien answered, gloomily; "it means debt, and gambling, and all sorts of horrors."

"Yes. But you are very rich, my lord, and he is your only brother. I should think his debts would not signify much while you have plenty of money."

The dark blood rose up over his lordship's face. "Miss Lisle, you don't understand, it is impossible to explain—to you. Guy has gone to the bad in every sense of the word. Pray do not ask me any more."

He shifted away from the gaze of the innocent, wondering blue eyes. She did not in the least comprehend what he wished her to infer by his innuendoes. Guy gambled and spent his money, she understood just that and no more.

"Well," she said, too highly bred to press an unwelcome subject, "that was not what I wished to say. Did you hear—was there any news?" She hesitated a little, and a faint flush rose up over her fair face. "Has anything been heard of Alice Warren?"

The question confounded him, yet he might have expected it.

"Alice Warren," he said, "Alice Warren? Who is she?"

"Who is she?" Pauline repeated, emphatically, "you did not need to ask that question two years ago when you admired her so greatly, Lord Montalien."

"Admired her so greatly! Alice Warren! oh, of course. I know now—how stupid I am—you mean the bailiff's daughter, of course!"

"Yes, I mean the bailiff's daughter. Poor Alice." "There is no news of her that I have heard. It is a very strange thing her running away from home as she did."

"Not in the least strange," retorted Pauline, with her customary frankness. "She ran away to be married!"

"To be married?"

Lord Montalien's face was startled and pale as he repeated it.

"Certainly. She wrote to me the night before she left home. I have the letter yet. She told me she was going to be married."

"Did she tell you to whom?"

His heart was beating as he asked the question, though he knew what the answer would be.

"No. To some one above her in rank, though, I know. Lord Montalien, don't you suspect it was one of the gentlemen staying at your place last month?"

He had had time to control himself, otherwise the gaze of the large, earnest eyes must have disconcerted him horribly.

"Miss Lisle, I have thought—I have suspected! She left late in the evening. Have you heard who travelled up with her to London?"

"Of course not; I have heard nothing but what her own letter tells me, and a few brief lines from Duke Mason, saying she was gone no one knew whether or why. Who went with her up to London?"

"Miss Lisle, will you take my arm?—they are going in to dinner. And will you forgive me if I do not answer your question? She was your friend—it is not from my lips you should hear the name of her companion."

"Do you mean your brother?" she demanded, abruptly.

"I am sorry to say—I do."

"Then I don't believe one word that she ran away to be married to him!" answered Miss Lisle, with calm decision. "She never cared for him, and he never paid her the least attention whatever. He may have gone up with her to London, but I am quite certain your brother is not the man whom she has married."

"If she is married!" Lord Montalien said, stung to bitterness by her words.

Miss Lisle did not blush one whit. She looked at him with surprised, unshamed eyes—the open, fearless gaze of perfect innocence.

"Of course she is married!" she said; "she told me she was going to be. Do you think she would run away to seek her fortune alone in London? There were other gentlemen at the Priory, last September, beside your brother, I suppose?"

"Three others—Allan Fane, Sir Harry Gordon, and Captain Villiers."

"And yourself?"

"And myself."

She looked at him searchingly for a moment—his face baffled her. She turned away and resumed her dinner with a resolute air.

"I shall find out," she said, quietly; "I'm going down to Speckhaven the day after to-morrow to spend a week. I shall find out."

"Going down to Speckhaven," he echoed, "to spend a week with your old friend Mason, I presume?"

"Yes; dear old Duke; he will be glad to see me. And I shall find out all about Alice Warren."

Lord Montalien was by no means allowed to monopolize the heroine of the evening. Sir Vane had invited several very eligible unmarried men, and

Miss Lisle's beauty and spirited style of conversation had already produced considerable impression. Her manner was simply perfect, a belle of four seasons could not have been more entirely and gracefully at ease. She talked very much better than most young ladies.

Pauline was clever, and had ideas of her own, and it was quite refreshing to some of those men about town to hear her fresh views of people and things. She was charming—that was the universal verdict—beautiful beyond doubt, accomplished and rich. She sang after dinner, and her rich voice astonished her hearers—it was so full, so sweet.

"She is equal to Patti!" was the verdict of more than one present. "She is a superb soprano."

Altogether Miss Lisle's first appearance, though her part this evening was a small one, was an entire success.

Lord Montalien found himself fascinated in a way he could not understand. She was so unlike the ordinary "Miss" he was accustomed to; she, so piquant, so sparkling, so brightly handsome and audacious, quite bewildered him. She possessed that spell irresistible in man or woman—the gift of fascination, her joyous laugh, her ringing voice, the bright flash of her eyes, took your heart by storm before you knew it.

Miss Lisle had said in all honesty that she meant to go down to Speckhaven in two days; but with the best of intentions, and the sincerest affection for her two friends there, two weeks elapsed before the promised visit was made.

London might be empty to some people, and the season over, but to this young lady, fresh from her twilight convent life, it was the most populous and delightful of cities. She went out continually; and October was very near its close when, one frosty evening, Miss Lisle opened the little garden-gate of Duke Mason's, and walked in by the open front door.

There were changes, many and great, in herself, but not one here. The roses and geraniums bloomed in perennial freshness, the old cat basked on the hearth, the old order, silence, cleanliness prevailed, and Rosanna was on her knees toasting muffins for tea. Two arms went around her neck, and an impetuous kiss, the only kiss poor Rosanna had received since she had said good-bye to her nursing, was pressed upon her withered cheek.

Duke came in presently. The firelight shone redly through the room, the lamp burned on the mantel, the table was spread for supper, and a graceful, girlish figure sat on a low stool, fresh and beautiful as a rosebud. Duke stood a second regarding this picture, then advanced with outstretched hands.

"Well, Duchess," he said, as if they had parted two weeks instead of two years before, "you have come back after all."

So "Polly" was home again, but somehow she was not the Polly of old. The fault was not hers; she strove to be in all things precisely the girl who had left them, but she sat before them a tall young lady, out of their world altogether, with the new dignity of dawning womanhood upon her, educated, refined, rich, handsome, fairer than ever, but never again to be little "Polly."

Late in the evening of the evening day Mr. Allan Fane, busily at work since early morning, threw down brushes and palette, lit a cigar, and started for his daily brisk twilight walk. On this particular evening his steps turned shoreward—he strolled along through the lamplit town and down to Speckhaven sands.

The Cave was a favourite resort of his, where he could sit, and smoke, and watch the whispering sea, and think, perhaps, of the girl who had first brought him thither. He was thinking of her now as he advanced along the shingly path, where she had long ago led him.

The last rays of the fading daylight were in the cold, gray sky; pale, yellow gleams of wintry brightness lit the West, and there was a ring of sharpness in the evening air. His steps echoed loudly on the sands, and a quiet figure standing at the entrance of the cave, watching those pale, yellow gleams, turned at the sound. Heard Pauline Lisle stood face to face.

He turned pale at the sight. He had not dreamed she was in Speckhaven. He had been thinking of her, imagining her radiant in her new life, and here she rose up before him like a spirit in the gloaming! She recognized him immediately, and held out her hand with her frank, bright smile.

"It is Mr. Fane!" she cried. "The very last person I expected to see! Lord Montalien mentioned your being at the Priory, too, but I had actually forgotten all about it."

Yes—the whole story was told in those lightly spoken words—she had "forgotten all about it," and all about him, as completely as though he had never entered her life. He had loved her as honestly and strongly as an honest and stronger man—he had given her up of his own accord, and he had no right to complain. But the bitter sense of loss was ever there—the brilliant, spirited face haunted him by night and day.

"Well," said Miss Lisle, "you don't look very cordial, I must say. Do you take me for a ghost, or a mermaid, Mr. Fane? You see I have been paying visits all day to my old friends; and this, my seaside cottage, is the last on the list. And now I really must go home. Poor Rosanna has a horror of night-dews and night-winds. She takes me to be a fragile blossom, that a sharp autumn blast would nip in twain. If you won't say anything else, Mr. Fane, perhaps you will say good-night!"

She laughed—Polly's sweet, gay laugh—drew her shawl closer about her, and turned to go. She was simply dressed, in a dark merino, a soft gray shawl, and a little pork-pie hat, with a scarlet bird's wing. But though he saw her often afterwards in silks and roses, the queen of the ball, never did she look lovelier than at that moment. He spoke with something of an effort—good Heavens, how cold and commonplace the words sounded!

"You will permit me to see you home, Miss Lisle—it will be quite dark before you are half way, and the town is full of strangers, down for the October meeting."

A provoking smile dawned on her face. She had not entirely forgotten the past, and the temptation to give him a small stab was irresistible.

"I am not the least afraid; thanks, very much, Mr. Fane. Besides—it is quite unpardonable of me to say it, I am afraid—but I have heard that Mrs. Fane is—jealous! Do you think she would mind very greatly if I permitted you to escort me home?"

He looked at her—a dark, painful flush rising on his face.

"You are merciless," he said. "You had your revenge two years ago, on the day you gave me back my ring! You might spare me now!"

"The ring you presented the same night to Miss Hanton! I saw it on her finger when I dined at the Priory. Please don't try to be sentimental, Mr. Fane. I have grown dreadfully old and wise since that foolish time, and pretty speeches are quite thrown away upon me, I assure you. But you may walk home with me—let us hope Mrs. Fane will never hear of it."

Her eyes were laughing wickedly. Indeed it was a weakness of this heroine of mine.

"She is always laughing—that Miss Lisle," an aggrieved admirer had said; "and the deuce of it is a man doesn't know whether she is laughing with him or at him."

"Pretty speeches are thrown away upon you, are they?" said Mr. Fane as they walked along side by side. "I can believe it—surfeited with them as you are. Do you know what Madame Rumour says, Miss Lisle?"

"Very scandalous things, no doubt. What?"

"That you are to be prosecuted next season as my Lady Montalien!"

"Then Rumour tells most unconscionable fibs!" answered Pauline, carelessly. "I'm not!"

"You never liked Francis Earlscount."

"Didn't I?"

"You don't like Lord Montalien."

"Don't I?"

"Miss Lisle, you know you don't! Your face tells the story of your likes and dislikes plainly enough."

"I must be very ungrateful, very unjust, if I do not. Lord Montalien is most kind, most courteous, and we are all coming down to spend Christmas and the hunting season at the Priory. To speak ill of one's future host in his absence is a return of hospitality not strictly Arabian."

"How does London life suit you?"

"Oh, excessively. I have been out every night since my return, and I don't know the meaning of the word fatigue; and I look forward to next season as a child to a holiday. Do you know"—her girlish pleasure shined in her great eyes—"the Duchess of Clanronald is going to present me?"

"You are to be envied, Miss Lisle. After one or two brilliant seasons we shall see the announcement of a brilliant marriage!"

He could not help harping on this string. He had lost her, and he loved her now as we do love the things we have for ever lost.

"Well, yes," said the young lady, coolly; "I hope so. Everybody marries, and I suppose I shall after four or five seasons, when I am quite—oh, quite an elderly person of four or five and twenty—marry some fine old English gentleman who has a great estate." Are you quite alone at the Priory, Mr. Fane; and might one ask why you bury yourself alive there?"

"I am working hard, Miss Lisle, and I find inspiration in the air of Speckhaven. Do you recollect the 'Rosamond and Eleanor'? Yes, I see you do—I am finishing that for the spring exhibition."

She looked at him sanely.

"What little country girl have you chosen for Fair Rosamond now? Please be merciful as you are strong, Mr. Fane, and don't turn her head with your flatteries."

"I paint my Rosamond from memory—my Elea-



nor is one of the housemaids at the Priory—a tall, black-browed, Roman-nosed young woman. And I am quite alone up in the big, rambling old mansion. Guy was with me during the races, but he has gone."

"Ah! Guy Earls-court! Do you know I have never met him yet? and people speak of him as though he were the man in the Iron Mask, or Guy Fawkes, or anybody else dreadful. Mrs. Galbraith calls him 'a detestable,' whatever that may be. Pray what has that unhappy young man done?"

"Nothing to any one save himself. You have heard of the road to ruin, I suppose? Well, he has been going at a gallop along that highway for the last three years. The end must come very soon now. If his old grand-aunt do not die, and leave him her money, he must, in a few months at the most, send in his papers to sell and fly the country. He is involved beyond redemption. Mrs. Galbraith is quite right—in a marriageable point of view he is a detestable."

"Poor fellow," Paulina said, her eyes softening. "I am sorry! I used to like him very much. He was so handsome."

"And is still. I wonder his handsome face has not worn him as long ago. It would, I think, if he tried, but he seems to have no time."

"If he is ruined, as you say, how does he live?"

"By a well-made betting-book, by a run of luck at cards, by cleverly written magazine articles. Once or twice his aunt has paid his debts—he tells me she has refused to do it again. He has gone across to Germany for the autumn races."

They had reached the house now, and Rosanna was waiting anxiously in the doorway. Miss Lisle bade him good-night, and Allan Fane strolled homeward through the sharp October night, thinking—well, not of his wife.

Sir Vane Charteris came down for his ward at the expiration of the week, and Paulina went with him very willingly. It was pleasant to see her old friends, no doubt, but life in Duke Mason's house seemed hopelessly dull to her now. Is there ever any going back in this world? Had she never left it she would have grown up there happy and content; now she could no more have taken up the old life than she could have wept burning tears over the sorrows of Amanda Fitzalan.

On the night of her return she went to see Ristori in "Mary Stuart." The house was full, the actress magnificent, and Miss Lisle, in pale flowing silks and pearls, looking charming. Two or three of her admirers were in the box; and when the first act was nearly over there entered Lord Montalien. His eyes lit as they fell on her, hers gave him the briefest, coldest possible glance. She did not like Lord Montalien—the girl's perceptive faculties were very keen. She knew him to be false, cruel, smooth, and deceitful. The expression on his mouth revolted her, the hard, cold glitter of his eyes made her shrink away.

"I hope you found all your friends at Speckhaven quite well," he said to her as the curtain went down.

"Quite," she answered, briefly. "All who remain."

"Ah! you allude of course——"

"I allude, of course, to my dearest friend, Alice Warren. I told you that when I went to Speckhaven I should penetrate the mystery of her flight, and—— I have failed."

There was a satisfied smile just perceptible about his mouth—gone in an instant.

"I feared you would. Her father could tell you nothing."

"Nothing that you had not already told me—that your brother travelled with her up to town."

"Then Guy is the man. Are you satisfied now that my suspicions are right?"

"Would you like me to tell you whom I do suspect, my lord?"

"Undoubtedly."

She looked at him—full, bright, dauntlessly, and answered:

"You!"

"Miss Lisle!"

"My lord, your brother Guy was never the man Alice left home to marry. She never cared for your brother—she did for you. Guy may have travelled up with her to London—he acknowledges it, indeed, but he had no part in her flight. He went to Mr. Warren's house, and told him so, and the old man believes him. He met her at the railway station, he travelled up with her in the same carriage, and at her request he drove with her to her destination. That destination he refuses to tell; she bound him by promise herself not to do so; and Mathew Warren does not urge him to reveal it. He is bitterly, cruelly angry—he never wishes to hear her name—if she came to his door a wedded wife he would not take her in. He will

never forgive her—he will not lift a finger to seek her. But I will!" and her blue eyes flashed. "I shall find her, and that before long!"

"May I ask what you mean to do?"

"I shall advertise—I shall employ the best detectives in London—I will move heaven and earth to find her!"

"And when she is found will she thank you, do you think, for thus forcing her from the privacy she seems to desire?"

"She will forgive me—we loved each other. Lord Montalien, will you tell me the truth? will you acknowledge you know where she is?"

"Miss Lisle, from any other lips the question would be an insult. I know nothing of Alice Warren. Wherever she is, whosever a wife she may be, she is not mine. Will you not believe me when I pledge you my honour? I speak the truth."

She turned from him, and back to the stage, as the curtain went up on the next scene. Her face was set with an expression new to every one who saw her.

"I shall never rest until I know the truth; I will never desist until I discover this secret. I shall find Alice Warren if she is in England, and the man who promised to make her his wife!"

(To be continued.)

## VICTOR AND VANQUISHED.

### CHAPTER XXVI.

Look like the innocent flower,  
And be the serpent under it.

Shakespeare.

BARON CHATELARD and Captain La Mort were in deep council the morning subsequently, in the baron's strong-room.

"If you can do this, La Mort, I will give you thirty thousand pounds, and you shall marry her whenever you choose. Only get the whole of that hated Kestigero's papers back into our hands, which detail my share in his father's ruin—and see that he does not escape the false step!"

So spake Chastelard, his mean face working with hatred and anxiety.

La Mort, humming a light-hearted air, listened approvingly, and his bright eyes sparkled with audacity.

"Thirty thousand pounds, bravo!" he cried, breaking off in his song; "I would descend into Hades for that, monsieur le baron! Come, I like your bargain, and shall perform my part with zest. To-day, then, this youthful fire-eater—this braggart—this Alexander, who would conquer the world, shall, at the moment when he would tear the proud banner of Chastelard from its place, be transformed into a handsome corpse. Appropriate moment!"

"Only rid me of the viper, and I won't grudge you what I say, though it's a large sum, monsieur, for such an easy service."

"Pardon, my friend, if it is so easy why will you not do that service for yourself?" retorted La Mort, with a sinister smile. "It cannot be that monsieur le baron is afraid of the boasting boy?"

Chastelard gave him a steady and by no means friendly look.

A tap resounded on the door, and L'Ombre entered the room.

"Lecane wishes an audience," said he, with all the cringing deference of a tyrant's favourite.

"The warder? What can he want?" growled Chastelard. "Send him in, L'Ombre; he brings news, I suppose."

Lecane, the man whom Lucia had dismissed for accepting Badoura's bribes, entered with an apprehensive air.

"My lord," began he, tremblingly, "I hope you won't blame me for daring to come back again after forfeiting my place; but I have something here that your lordship might wish to see."

"What are you talking about, you varlet?" snapped the baron; "how have you forfeited your place?"

Lecane looked surprised.

"Did not Miss Chastelard tell you that she had dismissed me from the gate only yesterday morning?" cried he.

"No, she didn't. What did she do that for? What was your crime? Eh, speak out, Lecane, immediately!"

The porter, agreeably surprised at finding that he was to be his own accuser, determined to palliate his offence sufficiently to leave room for possible condonation.

"Mademoiselle had a visitor the night before last, your lordship, and I was aware of it. Perhaps she feared that I would betray her to your lordship—however that may be, she made an excuse to dismiss me, and appoint Moulins in my place."

"Heaven! What's all this?" snarled Chastelard,

becoming yellow with rage; "my daughter had a visitor and concealed it from me? Who was it, you knave?"

"A young woman—a messenger from Mr. Hereward; she stayed an hour with mademoiselle in her bed-room, and I saw then a light shining through the window of this room."

"Ah—ah, the traitress!" shrieked the baron, "she it was then who opened the secretary and abstracted the papers! She stole my keys from under my head, and replaced them again! Ah, the viper, she has the Kestigero blood in her, but I will crush it out."

He gnashed his teeth almost like a madman, while La Mort listened with jealousy-inflamed face.

"How did you discover this?" asked he, when he was calm enough.

"The woman, when she summoned me to the gate, told me mademoiselle had sent for her, and I was forced to admit her. Then I saw mademoiselle, at the close of her interview, lead her through the garden, and it was not until the young woman had gone that I suspected her to be Mr. Hereward's—the Indian girl whom they say Mr. Hereward is so kind to. Next morning mademoiselle came to me, and accused me of accepting a bribe from the young person, and dismissed me for unfaithfulness."

"A ruse to send you away that you might not reveal what you had seen," said Chastelard, spitefully. "Well, my good fellow, what else?"

"I thought I might serve your lordship, even though I was tricked out of your service, as one may say, so I went to the inn, to make sure who the young woman was, and was fortunate enough not only to see her but to make her believe that I was anxious to be of use to her. Sure enough, she turned out to be Mr. Hereward's Indian princess, and she brought me this letter from him, which I was to deliver safely to mademoiselle. But I thought your lordship might be interested to learn that there was a correspondence between mademoiselle and Mr. Hereward, and I made bold to bring it to you."

Chastelard stretched out his bony hand eagerly, and clutched the letter.

"You've done wisely, Lecane," chuckled he, "Go back to your post, and tell Moulins he's better fitted to feed the hounds. And mark you, not a word to any one about this letter!"

Lecane retired, delighted at his own diplomacy.

"Now to see what this insolent boy has to say to my daughter," sneered the baron, tearing open the missive.

As he perused the lines a snort of angry contempt escaped him, yet he read on more and more eagerly. Suddenly he seemed to stop breathing, a livid paleness overspread his visage, and a chilly perspiration oozed from every pore.

Long after he had ceased to read he affected to keep his gaze riveted to the paper, to allow his astonished thoughts time to arrange themselves.

At last he folded up the missive, and, holding it tightly in his crooked fingers, turned his serpent-like eyes with a strange expression in them upon La Mort, who had waited impatiently enough his turn to read his rival's letter.

"The well I did not carry such a fear-arousing missive!" mocked the captain, scrutinizing the other's working features. "You look as if you would like to fall upon Lecane and read him. What says the boy?"

"Oh, it is only braggadism—an insolent youngster's threats," quavered the old man, with a furtive glance from his downcast eyes. "Put him out of the way for me, good captain, and I'll not grudge you some little reward."

"Some little reward? My worthy father-in-law that is to be, why will you not answer in figures arithmetical instead of metaphorical? 'Some little reward' sounds beggarly; 'thirty thousand pounds' is better, much better, monsieur le baron. But we will not discuss the terms now. Let me see Monsieur Hereward's love-letter to my betrothed."

"You shall read it after his decease," mumbled the baron, thrusting the paper into his bosom; "that will give you an additional spur to be successful."

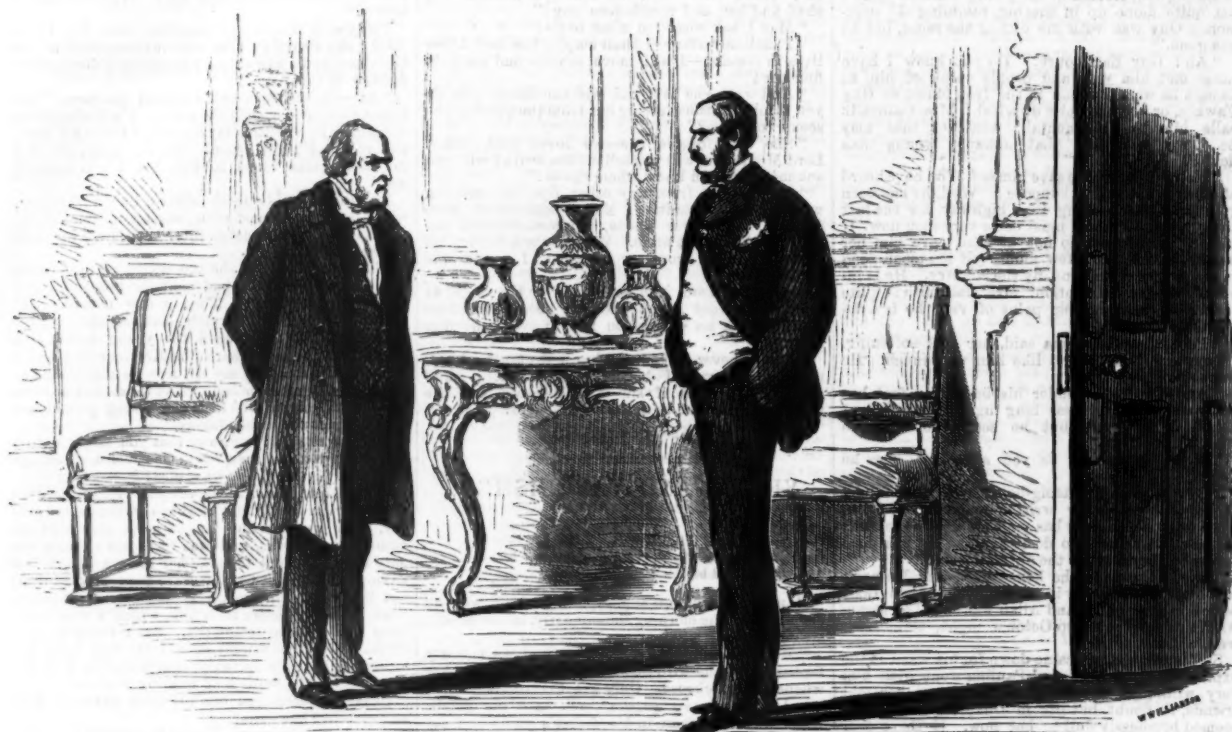
Mingled with his abject terror was a mean triumph, which did not escape La Mort.

"You are not candid with me," said he, in a low, threatening tone. "You have something in mademoiselle's letter that you are concealing from me, your faithful ally. Monseigneur, I decline to work in the dark. I am no blind tool, I am your ally on terms of perfect equality."

Chastelard's hooded eyes were gleaming with malice as he suddenly caught La Mort by the wrist.

As once before, La Mort grew deadly pale, and uttered an involuntary cry of pain, wrenching away his arm.

"Ah, ah!" hissed Chastelard, laughing maliciously. "You have a wound there, have you, on? And you



[A CHANGE IN THE TERMS.]

have not told me. Brave captain, why do you conceal the scars that attest your valour?"

"Was that done by intention?" exclaimed La Mort, in a low voice.

If Chastelard had not been intent upon another discovery which he contemplated making he might have quailed before the extraordinary dilatation of those large pupils.

"Oh, no, dear captain," sneered Chastelard, with twisting lips.

As La Mort adjusted the bandage upon his left wrist Chastelard's long fingers twitched at the loose sleeve of his right arm—for La Mort wore a gorgeous dressing robe—and in a moment he had pulled it up, and was peering at a strange, blood-red image which was traced upon his fore-arm, just inside the elbow.

So sudden was the movement, and so rapidly executed, that one could not be sure whether he had seen the mark or not, for he dropped the sleeve almost before La Mort had time to seize him by the throat and hurl him across the room.

"Treachery!" uttered La Mort, in a terrible voice; "who has betrayed me, monseigneur? He shall answer for it."

Chastelard gathered himself up, pale and trembling, but advanced eagerly, whispering, with an odious attempt at friendliness:

"My brave captain, what is the matter? What have I done? I was only looking for more wounds. I see there is one upon your arm—you must take care of it, for it may become dangerous."

"Go on," said La Mort, with a calmness which was fatal, while his eyes glared as the panther's before a spring.

"Listen, my friend," said the old man, plucking at his dead-looking beard; "thirty thousand pounds would be a terribly large sum to dower mademoiselle with, and I am poor. Zounds! such extravagance would drain the treasury. I could wed her to a richer husband than you, you know, and you give her nothing. Come, La Mort, say fifteen thousand."

The old man's unblushing avarice might have stunned an honourable man.

La Mort looked strangely for a few minutes, and gnashed his handsome teeth.

"Do you expect me to rid you of your enemy for fifteen thousand pounds?" demanded he.

"Oh, you must rid yourself of your enemy," said Chastelard, with a horrible triumph; "for you see he knows a great deal too much about you. Indeed I shall not give my daughter to a man with such a history unless he can silence his traducer."

"Ah, so Hereward is my accuser, is he?" said La

Mort, regaining his composure. "I understand now who the traitor is. But, baron," added he, with a last hope, "of what has the boy accused me? What can he know of me?"

"He declares you to be——"

The word was not spoken, but only formed by his lips, yet La Mort started as violently as if it had been shrieked before a hundred horrified auditors.

"Enough!" muttered La Mort, with an odd lowering of those sinister eyebrows. "I agree to the fifteen thousand pounds. But, monseigneur, you must betroth your daughter to me this very day in the presence of the household."

"Why to-day?" demanded the baron, suspiciously. "Because I have no guarantee that you will respect your promise after I have removed the man who holds your life as well as mine in his hand," returned the captain, with a cold sneer.

"As you will, my friend. I have no intention of defrauding you of your wife. After all I prefer a son-in-law who can be of use to me."

"Since perfect confidence is to be between us," rejoined the younger man, still with that furtive glare in his eyes, "you need not fear to show me that redoubtable missive."

"Not yet, La Mort—not yet!" cried Chastelard, with a shiver and a scared look; "you shall see it when—when Hereward is dead!"

"As you please, my friend," uttered La Mort, softly.

"Madame," said La Mort, bending over the tapestry frame where Lucia sat with her women at work, "you are to become my own fair betrothed to-day. Your father has given his consent."

She started up with a terrified gasp—a blood-red stain on either cheek, her silvery hands enclasped.

"To-day," she echoed, wildly, then added, in a low and sad voice—"Yes, let it be to-day, it is fitting."

"My adorable one!" smiled La Mort, exultantly, and, drawing her to a deep-bowered window, he clasped her to his breast.

She gazed as if distraught upon him; her bright hair burst from its ribbon-bands and flamed over his arms and her own heaving bosom; her delicate face was distorted by a hopeless misery never there before.

"You never loved that traitor Hereward, who could prefer a dusky heathen to your immaculate loveliness?" breathed La Mort, with insidious tongue.

She writhed in his clasp, and the bitterness of death was stamped upon her features.

"No, monsieur!" she exclaimed, in a low, mechani-

cal voice, "I never loved him; I will love you, since you wish it. Ah! what do I promise?"—with a gasp of miserable laughter. "Love! I am sure you will not ask that, sir; but I will be your wife."

La Mort answered by stooping to press her livid cheek to his own. She made a frantic leap from his embrace, and with frenzied gait hurried from his presence, her face hidden in her hands.

Yet Miss Chastelard stood, scarcely an hour from that time, in the great hall, clad with regal magnificence, and before her father and the assembled household was solemnly betrothed by a priest to Captain Sangfroid La Mort.

Her lovely face seemed strangely convulsed when her betrothed husband touched its bloodless marble with his lip, and she gazed with a frozen kind of astonishment upon the rich betrothal ring which he put on her finger.

Yet she signed the requisite documents with a steady hand, and, dashing down the pen, looked around her with a poor semblance of triumph which was fearfully at variance with her feelings.

The very servants whispered to each other as they went out of the chamber that mademoiselle had never been herself since the baron had put Mr. Hereward in the dungeon, and that mademoiselle had too soft a heart for Kentigern's Tower.

"Very good," said La Mort, when the ceremony was completed; "now I am ready for that little transaction of yours, monseigneur. My love," to Lucia, "you are so fatigued that I do not think you will enjoy the coming of that insolent impostor with his brawlers to wrest the Tower from our good father. Suppose you retire into strict seclusion for the rest of the day, pretty one, in case of insult; and, while monsieur le baron waits for Hereward, I will fly to Rothes for another force of soldiers." At this he gave Chastelard a significant glance. "But come, dear father, let us not weary my Lucia with so unpleasant a subject."

The pair left the room talking earnestly.

"It is as well to keep mademoiselle out of the way while this lamentable accident to Monsieur Hereward is taking place," said La Mort, impressively; "for if she suspected my agency she would even yet draw back, fast bound as she is. So, baron, you shall tell her that I am at Rothes while the tableau is being enacted, but in reality I in suitable disguise shall be fulfilling my part of the contract. Adieu now; I go to procure those documents by stratagem."

"Success attend you, captain."

"It will!" replied La Mort, with a covert smile, and they parted.

(To be continued.)





[ADMIRATION.]

## THE LOST CORONET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"One Sparkle of Gold," "Evelyn's Plot," &amp;c., &amp;c.

## CHAPTER V.

The wretch condemned with life to part  
Still, still on hope relies;  
And every pang that rends the heart  
Bids expectation rise.

The day was far spent, and the shades of the summer evening were once more closing over the busy metropolis, as Nicholas Lovett again prepared to leave his gloomy abode for the fresher atmosphere and more brilliant illumination of the outer world.

"Do not sit up for me, Ruth," he had said as he took up his glazed hat. "I may be late, and you were up sooner than I was after our late watching last night, or rather this morning."

She looked at him with a smile of scornful indifference on her well-formed but pale and wasted lips.

"You are a bird of ill omen, Nicholas. Your only time for sleep appears to be in the hours of light; while directly darkness comes over the earth you leave your hiding-place, like the bats and the owls. Well, you are too old to change your nature, and it is vain to waste advice or reproach on one so hardened in sin."

"Stop there, Ruth, stop there!" he said, fiercely. "There are worse crimes than have ever stained my conscience, and I wouldn't change with you for your dark, cold, measured hate if I could shift my own sins, as you call them, on you, with all that they have brought and may bring yet of guilt and misery. To my thinking, the deed you have brooded on for such long, silent years is worse than some of the crimes that have sent many a poor fellow to the hulks. So it is as well to drop these little sneers and taunts, Madam Ruth. We can both go on our own way, except when we happen to jostle together as we are doing just now."

Then, slamming the door behind him with a violence that indicated more smothered rage than it was convenient to display, he descended the narrow stairs, and in another moment Ruth heard the street door close, and his heavy step sounding on the pavement beneath; but she only gave a contemptuous and not ill-pleased smile as she leaned from the window and gazed after his broad, plebeian figure, with its awkward gait.

"Poor idiot!" she muttered, scornfully. "Well, so much the better, I shall be more amply avenged; but I must make all secure first, or he may ruin all, like a tiger breaking the bars of his cage. 'Twere best

to see her—yet, should she turn from me, the risk would be even greater than his bearish pranks."

Then she fell into another fit of musing that spoke of the importance of the stake for which she played such doubtful cards.

Meanwhile Nicholas hastened on his way till he reached one of the streets leading out of the Haymarket, and, after cautiously examining the number and appearance of one of the houses, he rang the bell, then gave the orthodox two strokes of the knocker as an indication of the "door" to which the visit was paid.

It was some minute or two before any notice was taken of the appeal, and he was preparing to repeat the summons when the door cautiously opened some inches, and a woman's head peered round from the inside.

"What do you want?" she asked, in a sharp, cracked voice.

"Jonas Dawes," he replied. "I know he's in; so don't keep a fellow waiting any longer, mother."

"Mother, indeed!" repeated the irate dame. "I am more like a daughter than a mother to the likes of you, if I may judge from your wrinkled face. What's your name? We don't let every Jack and Bill in that calls, I can tell you."

"There's the token you should know the right sort when you see them," returned Nicholas, coolly. "I knew Jonas Dawes years before you did—perhaps before you were born, since you're such a chicken; and it will be the worse for him if you keep me waiting any longer, I can tell you."

Then, coolly pushing open the door with his powerful arm, and putting the portress aside, with a muttered word that seemed to silence her scruples, he strode up the wooden staircase and opened the door of a room on the first floor of the uncarpeted landing-place, and unceremoniously entered, without even the warning of a preliminary tap.

There was a strong odour of smoke in the room—so dense, indeed, that for a moment it was difficult to see the sole occupant of the apartment by the light of the one candle on the table near him.

But when the eye got accustomed to the murky atmosphere the figure and features and *entourage* of the Jonas whose name had been recently banded between the disputants became clearer to the visitor.

He was perhaps ten years younger than Nicholas, and of a totally different build and air.

Tall and slight, with features that might have been even handsome ere wasted and debased by vice and dissipation, Jonas seemed to bear some marks of having once known a different station and companionship than he could possibly command in his pre-

sent condition, and the bitter, restless discontent that sat on his haggard countenance perhaps betokened a secret gnawing of such memories in his mind.

"Well, Lovett, I thought you were going to play me false," he said, with a careless nod, as Nicholas closed the door behind him. "I expected you last night."

"It's no thanks to your landlady that I'm here now," returned Nicholas, roughly. "She wanted to slam the door in my face, and I promise you I wouldn't have come again if she'd stood out much longer. What do you have such an idiot for about you?"

"Oh, she looks after my house well enough," returned Jonas. "Fancies I'm spoony on her; wherefor she'd fight a legion of Bobbies on my behalf. Never mind her, Lovett. Tell me what kept you last night."

"Business; I was at a countess's ball," returned Nicholas, with a coarse laugh, that brought a fierce flash into his companion's eyes.

"Don't play off such foolish chaff on me, man," he said, angrily. "Remember you are playing with edge-tools when you have to do with me, and if you broke your word wantonly I'll—"

"Tush, tush, man; what's the good of a row between old chums like us?" interrupted Nicholas. "There, give us a pipe, and bring out the grog, and we'll soon drown all such mistakes in the liquor. I tell you I was on business, and I was at the ball I spoke of, and when you're ready I'll tell you the reason why."

Jonas was fain to comply, for, as Ruth had said, there was a touch of a bear's nature in the man with whom he had to deal, and his own more excitable but weaker temperament cowed before it.

Nicholas lighted the pipe, and mixed a strong decoction of whisky, for his own share, then, with a sort of triumphant chuckle, resumed his explanation.

"Jonas, I'm going to swim at last, and if you're up to the dodge I'll drag you out of the mire with me, my boy."

"If you do not you would have a very good chance of sinking again into it neck and shoulders," retorted Jonas, angrily. "Remember that little matter last year, Master Lovett—I mean in October, you know." The younger man gave a significant nod as he spoke.

"Don't be reckless, Jonas," was the cool retort. "As if you'd risk your head to get mine into the noose!"

"If you think to the contrary you're out of your reckoning," said Jonas, fiercely. "By all that is sacred, I'd do it before six hours were over my head if you gave me the slip."

"By all that is fiendish!" would be a more proper

expression, Master Jo," said the unmoved Nicholas. "But don't put yourself out of the way, my good fellow. I've no idea of doing the shabby, and if you are sharp enough I may help you to something a great deal more taking than your pugnacious damsel below. What do you think of a nice little sum of money and a pretty little angel into the bargain? Is not that worth striking a blow for, Master Dawes?"

The younger man's eyes flashed eagerly for a moment, but then the old look came over his face. "No bad idea, if it were true, Nicholas; but I can't cry 'halves' when I don't see any chance of a 'whole.' Where's it to come from for such hopeless Bohemians and outcasts as you and I? It's just wasting one's time. Better devote ourselves to some rational scheme for getting out of the country altogether. I'm ready to be off, for one; and it's not a bad chance while the lion's sleeping, eh, Lovett? You understand. He'll not be safe many weeks longer, I tell you."

"He can sleep or wake as he lists if we succeed in our plans," returned Nicholas, bluntly. "Jonas, can't you sharpen up with enough to see that I'm in earnest, and not telling one of those diabolical cranks that you used to amuse yourself with in your palmy days?"

He gave a tremendous puff at the "churchwarden," that made even the smoke-geese Jonas choke and sneeze as it came in the face which was inclined forward in listening attention towards his companion.

"You can't ram an idea into a fellow's head by choking him," he said, sneeringly, when he had recovered his voice. "Yes, unless you are mad or drunk, Lovett, I begin to fancy you are in earnest; only it has too Bertramite a touch in it for me to think it possible."

Lovett gave a coarse laugh as he emptied his tumbler.

"This is the first liquor I've had to-day, Jonas, and, as to lunacy, I don't think I'm in any danger of a straitwaistcoat at present. Yet," he said, more seriously, "Heaven knows I've had enough to drive a man frantic, even before I was your age, Jonas. But that's neither here nor there just now, only that it has something to do with what's in the wind just now, and, to say truth, it brings back some queer memories that I thought had gone to the bottom long ago."

So strange a spasm of subdued but genuine emotion convulsed his harsh features that Jonas literally rubbed his own eyes to convince himself he read its expression aright.

"Lovett, you are in a queer mood to-night anyhow," he said, in a more gentle tone. "If there is any embarrassment in the case I believe it is that you are deceived, not me. Come, man, out with it. Two heads are better than one; and if there is any possibility of getting ourselves above water I promise you I won't be the one to hang back, cost what it may. I tire to death of this degraded life, and care little what comes of me."

He gave an impatient gesture, which spoke of a long-cherished bitterness fast deepening into despair.

"Not so fast, friend," said Nicholas, shaking off the momentary remorse that had stung him, and speaking in his usual rough, blunt style. "It won't do to expose one's cards at once even to a partner in the game. Not that I distrust you, so you needn't look fierce over that; but simply because I've others concerned in the matter on whom it depends even more than myself."

"Then it may be but moonshine after all," rejoined Jonas, gloomily.

"It's more likely to be golden sunshine," returned his companion, with a laugh. "I tell you, Jonas, I have to deal with a woman twice as determined as you or I—a woman who has had the patience to wait for nearly twenty years for revenge, in order to make it sarer and sweeter. There's little doubt of her, I promise you, and she can't do all she wants without me. In my turn, have my little ends to gain with you; and perhaps a troublesome encumbrance on my hands which you will be very ready to relieve me of at the same time, and make matters pleasant to all parties."

"Go on. Of course I must have some better understanding before I can promise anything," said the younger man, doubtfully.

"Well, we'll put the case then plainly and straightforwardly," returned Nicholas. "You have, as you say, sunk pretty low from what you were born to, Master Jonas, and I expect your old uncle wouldn't have much mercy if—if, mark me, he found you had gone a step still deeper in the mire than he imagined. I expect he'd show as little forbearance to you as a stranger if he discovered you had been playing any tricks with him—oh, old fellow?—and as, luckily for you, I'm in the same boat with yourself, I'm the man to save you."

"To ruin me, you mean!" exclaimed Dawes, fiercely, his dark face turning livid with rage as his com-

panion went sneeringly on with his unflattering picture. "Lovett, you have been my bane. I was bad enough when I knew you. I had plunged into dissipation and vice, I had wasted my own little fortune, I had offended and disgusted the relative who might have made me wealthy at his pleasure; but I had not committed actual crime, my conscience was not stained and lacerated as it is now. You talk of saving me! Pshaw! it is enough to make me risk all to secure you the fate you deserve."

"It's ill playing with a desperate man, Master Jonas," said Lovett, calmly; "and, though I'm in a mood to be very long-suffering just now, you might catch me in a temper that wouldn't brook such raving nonsense. I tell you I'm not one to be played with at your pleasure, and so you'd find. 'Life for life' might be acted over as it has been thousands of times before—you understand, Jonas? It's a pity to have to speak plainer to an old chum, but what I say I mean, and stick to."

He gave a significant blow on the table beside him as he finished his low-toned warning, which was deepened in its force by the heavy scowl of his thick brows.

Jonas evidently quivered under its dark threat; his was no nature to cope with that tiger-like fierceness, that cold, savage temper of his companion in vice.

"I never said I wanted to break faith with you, Lovett; but even a sheep will butt when she's pressed too hard, and an old friend like myself may be driven to show his teeth, whether he uses them or not. But come, let's drown unkindness in a bumper, and tell me as much as you can about this magic scheme to wind one up from the bottom to the top of the ladder."

He poured out a deep draught of the mixture he had just concocted for himself and his companion.

"It's said in a few words, old fellow," replied Nicholas, his good humour returning either with the mystic words or the stimulating drink offered by the host.

"Before many weeks, perhaps many days, I shall have a pretty girl with a fat dowry on my hands. Now what I propose is that you shall take the useless damsel and some of the useful cash as your share of the windfall, and in return give me up the proofs—that is, the slender hold you have over me. Isn't it a very good bargain for you, my toothy pal?"

Nicholas was waxing genial, and his hand came down on the knee of Jonas Dawes with a force that made the limb ring again.

"It all depends on the amount," returned the younger man, doubtfully. "I've little fancy for a wife, to hang like a log round my neck, especially when I've not even seen her, unless she brings what will keep her and myself as her dowry. Besides, my fine fellow, you forget that it's purchasing your own liberty, if not life, at a remarkably cheap rate."

"Tush, man, tush! It's a million times more for your benefit than mine. First, you are too much in the mire yourself to make it safe to spatter me with mud, and, in the next place, I'm giving you a splendid start in life in your old age," replied Lovett. "Why, your old uncle might be brought to book when you set up as a respectable man, with a beautiful wife, and I shall make a special provision for such a contingency in the bond."

Nicholas laughed heartily at his own jest, though Jonas had sufficient penetration to divine the undercurrent of serious meaning which pervaded the coarse badinage of his companion.

"Well," he said, more warmly, "I pledge myself to nothing, Lovett. It's unfair to expect a man to leap blindfold. But should you make your words good you have little to fear from any hesitation on my part."

"Hesitation," repeated Nicholas, with a sneer. "It's the girl we have most to fear from, not from you, Master Jonas; but I shall find a way to teach her submission, I doubt not. Then we are agreed, old fellow? You will accede to my terms, and release me from all hold when I have the equivalent to offer you? Isn't that it?"

"I suppose so; yes. There can be no risk in giving that promise," replied Jonas, hesitatingly.

"I should think not; but a great risk in refusing it," rejoined the other, rising. "Then our business is at an end, Jo. I'll see you again when matters are ripe, and, harkye, you'd better give that old girl downstairs a hint not to keep a fellow waiting in the cold another time. It isn't good for the benefit."

Then, with a grasp of the long, thin fingers that were one of the few marks of gentle birth preserved by the reckless roval, Nicholas Lovett departed.

With him seemed to vanish even the slender light and hope that his tidings had breathed into the tenant of that gloomy chamber.

"Idiot that I am to believe him, double-dyed villain that he is," he groaned, casting himself back in the deep Windsor chair that was the grand fount of the comfortless abode. "It is but a trap to catch

me in a more hopeless net, or to save himself from the sword I hold over him. No, no, I am not so weak as to hang on such a rotten rope as that."

Then he resorted once more to the terrible stimulus that was driving him yet deeper into the despair which threatened his very reason.

But ere the deep draught was finished the door once more opened, and the woman who had admitted Nicholas Lovett—or, to speak more correctly, permitted his entrance—walked rapidly into the room, and stood close to the chair which the late guest had quitted, though she did not avail herself of it.

She was scarcely so devoid of attractions as Nicholas had painted her, and some few years before she might even have been pronounced handsome in her own style.

Tall and well formed, with a colourless but clear and smooth skin, large, full, dark eyes, and a profusion of dark-brown hair, Esther Farn lacked but a neater toilet and a more feminine expression to give her even yet a portion of beauty, though more than thirty years had planted lines in her brow and cheeks, and there were dark, haggard circles round her eyes which passion and evil influences had deepened before their time.

"Jonas," she said, sharply, her eyes piercing like daggers into the man's very thoughts, "who was that? What brought him here to-night? I like it not, and I won't have it, that's more."

Jonas moved restlessly in his chair, and the smile which he strove to make scornful was only forced and ghastly as he replied:

"Don't be foolish, Esther. It was only an old friend come to look after me a bit. Do you suppose I'm to be shut up like a prisoner from every one I ever knew but yourself, and give an account of those whom I choose to see? It's ridiculous."

"But you shall, you must," repeated the woman, eagerly. "I didn't like him, Jonas. He was insolent, and treated me like dirt; as if I had not power in my own house and over your friends, and—and I—I suspect him. What did he want? Would he take you away, Jonas? I'd rather follow you to your grave than let you desert me, and I will."

Jonas looked sharply at her.

"Esther, you have been listening to what does not concern you," he said, fiercely. "I'll never forgive you if you have—never see you more, mark that. If I am your lodger I'm not your slave."

"My lodger!" she repeated, scornfully. "My dependent, my sworn scion, him for whom I have toiled to procure the luxuries his sensual tastes demand. Don't talk like that, Jonas Dawes; but answer me. What did that man come for? Was it to propose to you a—wife?" Her eyes blazed dangerously. "Nay, I will be answered before I leave this room," she added, stamping her foot passionately. "I will not be betrayed, insulted, while you owe me the very food you eat, the shelter that hides you, the clothes that cover you. Answer me, and truly, for I can soon tell whether you speak falsely or not."

"Don't be such an infuriated idiot, Esther," he said, exasperated beyond patience. "As if I were responsible for all the wild fancies that other people take in their heads. Of course I guess what you've been doing, and I shan't forget it, I can tell you; it's a pretty deep mark against you, my lass. But I'm not in the humour for quarrelling, and if you'll be reasonable we'll say no more about it."

"But did you listen to him? Do you dare even to think of any one else?" she gasped, half-drowned, yet unsatisfied by his words.

"I never yet saw mortal woman that I bestowed an hour's thought upon," he replied, impatiently, "except yourself, Esther; and you take pretty good care I shan't forget you many hours together. As to the rubbish you are making all this row about, it's moonshine and madness. I'm as likely to listen to him as you are to marry a duke. Do you think I look very like a marrying man?" he added, bitterly, glancing round, "and, as you say, without even the means of getting food and clothing for myself, to say nothing of a wife. I thought you had more sense, woman."

Perhaps Jonas wished by this assertion to test the amount of information which Esther Farn had acquired; but, if so, he failed in his object. Either she was really ignorant, or too wary to incense him farther by betraying her knowledge, and for some moments she remained silent and apparently cowed by his reproach.

"There, I knew you would come to yourself when the fit was over," he resumed, taking her hand in his. "You're a regular brick when you choose, and no one knows it better than I do, as I'll prove some day, Esther, unless you quite kick over the traces. I couldn't stand that, you know. There, give me a kiss and be off, there's a good girl, for I'm as sleepy as a dormouse."

Jonas skillfully adapted his tone to the peculiar weakness of his late companion. What woman is



insensible to praise of her beauty and her youth when on the shady side of thirty? And the girl finished the half-gained conquest of her jealous pique.

She gave and received the salute demanded, then descended to make the final arrangements for closing up the house for the night, ere she also sought her troubled pillow.

Jonas had perhaps lulled the fierce, suspicious pang, but the poison rankled and the doubts lingered in her jealous, ungoverned brain, which the half-comprehended words she had caught excited, never to be forgiven or removed.

#### CHAPTER VI.

And such is the fate of our life's early promise.

So passing the spring-tide of joy we have known.

Each wave that we danced in at morning ebbs from

us

And leaves us at eve on the bleak shore alone.

PAULINE, Countess of Mont Sorell, stood in her elegant morning-room, arrayed in all the costly splendour of diamonds, train, feathers, and the various concomitants of a presentation toilet.

It was a strange sensation to the *débutante*, for her fair neck and arms to be uncovered, and her form decked in jewels and satin and sweeping train, while the full sunlight still illumined the scene, and a gay smile at the anomaly which her appearance presented gave a childlike charm to the young face which bloomed under such a weight of wealth and dignity.

Very lovely did she look, that sweet young peeress, with that rare fascination of simplicity and refinement, and as the door opened and Lord Quentin Oliphant was announced, the flush on her cheek completed the dazzling charms on which the lover's eyes rested.

"Lover!" Was he in truth a "lover" of Pauline, or suitor to the Countess of Mont Sorell? Estelle De Vesce might perhaps have answered that question aright. But at that moment he was fairly captivated by the vision that awaited him, and he playfully bent on one knee and raised her hand to his lips.

"You look like a queen, my Pauline. I scarcely dare aspire to such familiarity as a touch of those red lips," he said, jestingly. "You will draw all eyes and win all hearts at the drawing-room."

"I wish but for one, dear Quentin," she replied, smiling sweetly. "If you are satisfied with me it is enough. I wish to be as fair in your eyes in a simple country dress as in this strange splendour, which seems too garish for the bright sunlight, am I not, dear Quentin?"

"Of course. Can you doubt it, foolish Pauline?" he said, half impatiently. "But still I like to see my darling's real position thus vindicated, and to find how truly she deserves her high rank. No one but a gently born and long-descended daughter of peers could wear her honours so becomingly. You look as if that brow were made to grace a coronet."

He touched the glittering tiara that flashed above the white young forehead and lovely eyes.

"Oh, if that was all, I think Estelle is far more intended for such a queenly style," she said, laughing. "Her tall figure and flashing beauty would create a far greater sensation than poor little Pauline's, and here she comes to prove my words," she added as the door once more admitted a visitant in the person of the dignified daughter of the De Vesces.

Certainly Pauline might have some reason in her modest confession if stateliness of carriage and haughty beauty could bear off the palm.

Estelle's rich dress of rose-coloured satin and the floating feathers and veil, that were so gracefully arranged down her tall form, the girdle fastened with an emerald clasp, the gift of her generous cousin, and the pendant necklace of the same gems on her swanlike throat, if not so splendid and glittering as the young countess's wealth of jewels, yet seemed to receive a charm from the queenly mien of the wearer.

The very childlike simplicity of Pauline made her appear at least a year or two less than her stately cousin, albeit there were not many weeks between their ages.

"Depend on it, you will be taken for the countess, Estelle dear," laughed Lady Mont Sorell, gaily. "I must hope that the directions for the presentation cards being in legible writing will save any mistake, or you would assuredly be announced as such to Her Gracious Majesty; do you not think so, Quentin?"

"Nay, it is not fair to put Lord Quentin's courtesy to so severe a test, Pauline," returned Estelle, with an ill-concealed exultation at the young man's evident admiration of her own proud beauty; "he is too gallant to depress poor Estelle De Vesce's humble position yet more painfully, though of course he can have but eyes for his liege lady, and only one opinion as to the palm to be assigned to her by all the world, from the Queen down to the meanest beggar who may get a glimpse of the heiress."

Quentin's reply might have been a rather embarrassing one to frame, but it was arrested by a summons from Lady Claud to join her in the drawing-

room, and the mandate was obeyed with unusual alacrity by all the parties concerned.

The *chaperone* of the two lovely girls gazed at them with pardonable pride as they approached the spot where she herself stood, arrayed in all the matron dignity of violet velvet and framed diamonds. But perhaps a softer and more lingering smile rested on her lips as she looked on Pauline's winning youthfulness than her own daughter's proud beauty obtained.

"Come," she said, "we shall be late. I do not wish Pauline's presentation to be delayed till after the Queen may be compelled to retire."

Taking Lord Quentin's arm, she hastened to the carriage, while the girls followed her in silence.

There was, of course, a little concourse round the doorway, attracted by the unusual stateliness of the equipage, with its tall, powdered footmen, its glittering trappings and gorgeous liveries; and when the young *débutante* rapidly crossed the pavement there was a general buzz of admiration and it might be envy from the female part of the group.

"Which is the countess?" said one young girl, eagerly.

"The fair one," replied an old woman near her. "But she's not so like a countess as the other, to my thinking; what do you say, child?"

"I wish I was her, that's all," was the sighing reply. "Oh, dear—oh, dear! How happy she must be!"

"Do you think so, foolish child?" returned the wrinkled dame. "Time will show, that's all. Old as I am I'd not change with her. There, come away, we've been gazing here long enough."

The old woman put her arm in her young companion's, and moved slowly from the spot.

The words seemed a perfect mockery to any one who witnessed Pauline's triumph during the next two hours—who heard the genuine flattery of the spectators round the palace, as Lady Mont Sorell's carriage slowly waited its turn—or who mingled in the brilliant throng within the royal apartments.

"Beautiful!" "Charming!" "Exquisitely fresh and youthful!" "They say she is engaged already—a burning shame, isn't it?" were remarks bandied about on every side in the antechamber crowd; and if Estelle's brunette charms excited approving praise it was but cold in comparison with the enthusiasm excited by the heiress.

"A splendid girl, too, that other one," observed a rather mature bachelor marquis and heir to a dukedom. "There's wonderful blood in her for such a young creature. She might be a princess of the blood, to judge by her *sang froid*. I rather like her style the best."

"There's a chance for you, Hartford," laughed the club chum to whom the remark was addressed. "The duke would be enchanted if you brought him a daughter-in-law at last; and, as you say, she looks an incipient duchess already."

"Pooh! Tremaine. I'm not such a gasometer as to blaze up at the light of a torch," returned his friend, coolly. "Besides, *entre nous*, I think strawberry leaves want something to keep up the roots as well as grace the blossoms, and I suppose this damsel has no belongings except her brunette charms."

"Hush! she hears you. I saw her eyes flash like a volcano in an eruption," whispered the cynical Tremaine. "I'd as soon live on Vesuvius as meet such a blaze as that. Only a salamander like you, Hartford, could stand it."

"Say, rather, an iceberg," retorted the marquis. "I've run the gauntlet of all the beauties of London, Paris, and Vienna, for the last ten years, and never knew whether I had a heart or not, either physically or metaphysically. But, see, there's another opening, they'll be off in a moment. Come this way."

Lord Hartford was right. The presence-chamber doors were thrown open, and in a few moments Lady Claud and her charges were before the eyes of majesty, whose approving smile as Pauline bent gracefully and reverently before her could not be mistaken.

Perhaps the remarks of the critics on Estelle's charms had in truth been overheard by the girl, for a deep carmine dyed her cheeks, and her dark eyes literally blazed as she too paid her homage. Yet, dazzling as she was, there lacked the gentle, encouraging expression in the royal lady's bow of acknowledgment which Pauline had received, and again the gnawing, serpent pangs stung the proud girl to the quick and blinded her to the exciting novelty of the scene, which was so amusingly engrossing to the light heart of the heiress. For Quentin was at her side, his wavering homage riveted for the time by the brilliant success of his object.

It was no light distinction to be the affianced husband of that youthful queen of the hour, and to know himself an object of envy to his competitors of every grade.

"You are the star of the whole assembly, Pauline," he whispered. "Your triumph is complete."

"I only value it for your sake, dear Quentin," was

the softly murmured reply. "If you are content that is all. But I like to be admired that you may not repeat your choice."

Quentin must have been more or less than man to be insensible to such sweet humility from one whose hand brought with it such splendid gifts, and his reply, if inaudible to others, brought a bright smile and soft flush to the cheeks of the fair girl that spoke his power over her happiness.

The reception was a crowded one, and it was late before the party could disengage themselves from the tiled mob who filled the chambers and corridors, and, after a tedious waiting, gain their carriage and return to the welcome repose of home.

"Shall you go to the opera to-night?" asked Lord Quentin as they approached Grosvenor Square.

"Oh, of course, it is *de rigueur*," interposed Lady Claud. "Noblesse oblige, you know, Lord Quentin, and we must show our *débutantes* to-night, even if they are *hors de combat* all day to-morrow. You will dine with and escort us? *Cela va sans dire—eh, Pauline?*"

The lady, who was in unusual spirits at the morning's success, laughed gaily at the half-doubting face of the young countess.

Pauline's eyes were, however, attracted in another direction before she had time to speak the reply that trembled on her lips.

The carriage stopped at their own door at the moment, and she perceived a well-remembered figure treading slowly from the steps.

"Aunt, there is Mr. Brereton. He must not go away without seeing us," she exclaimed, hurriedly, and in a moment the footman was despatched to bring back the retreating Stanley.

"Do not go without a word," said the girl as he half reluctantly approached. "We must hear the bulletin ourselves, must we not, Aunt Claud?"

Springing unassisted from the carriage, she flew lightly up the steps, while Stanley was forced to give his arm to the less active Lady Claud, and Quentin followed with Estelle, his brow darkening at the little incident with unreasonable vexation.

"Do not be anxious; she is only thoughtless," murmured Estelle, soothingly. "Remember how young she is."

"You are not older, and you can see the impropriety of such freedom, Estelle," replied the young man, gloomily.

"I am not a countess, and potted to the very top of my bent," smiled the girl, softly.

"No, but you are worthy to be a queen," he returned, gazing at her eagerly as her dark, wonderful eyes were turned on him with irresistible and tender sympathy. "Oh, Estelle, why can it not be?"

But before the rather enigmatical expression could be defined they had entered the morning-room, whither Pauline had led the way, as the nearest to the entrance hall.

"I have brought back the scarf you kindly lent me, Lady Mont Sorell," the young barrister was saying as they advanced into the room, "and I only wished to thank you for your condescending interest in my recovery, and to tell you that I am convalescent, and shall soon forget that any injury has been sustained by this treacherous arm, before bidding you farewell."

Forget! Ah! Stanley Brereton had need to ask pardon for the involuntary falsehood uttered in the bitterness of his suffering heart.

"But we shall not forget, Mr. Brereton," said the young countess, sweetly; "it is too great a service ever to pass from our minds, is it not, Quentin?"

She placed her small hand appealingly on her lover's arm.

"Oh, of course, we shall be too happy to offer Mr. Brereton any reward in our power," returned the young man, coldly. "But I am afraid that his path is too completely distinct from ours to make it very easy to serve him, unless, indeed, money can avail."

But even Quentin dared scarcely finish the sentence, for a fierce flash of proud resentment flamed up in Stanley's deep gray eyes that cowed the more superficial nature of his haughty rival.

"It may be time enough for Lord Quentin Oliphant to make such notable discoveries of inability when his aid is requested or needed by me," he said, with a loftiness that fairly crushed by its intensity of scorn the other's pride. "As it is, I am perfectly aware that there can be no possible community of interests between the humble barrister and the gentle Countess of Mont Sorell, however kindly she may wish to ignore the distinctness in our paths, and—"

"Perhaps there may be no such great difference after all; or, at any rate, on the reverse side," said a voice that certainly did not belong to any of the party, though it was not unfamiliar to one of them.

Then Ruth Lovett calmly advanced into the very centre of the apartment and stood confronting the group.

"What does this mean? Is this a friend of yours,

Mr.—a—Brereton?" asked Lord Quentin, contemptuously.

"I can answer that question," interposed Ruth as Brereton's stormy brow betokened a passionate retort. "That young man and I are as utterly unknown to each other as yourself and the humble individual who stands before you, my Lord Quentin, or rather more so, since I have some idea who you are, and I have not the slightest wish to make acquaintance with him. But I have no objection to speak my errand before him as he appears to take a wonderful interest in the so-called Countess of Mont Sorell, and may be useful to her in an emergency."

"The 'so-called' countess! Are you mad, woman?" exclaimed Lady Claud, indignantly. "Mr. Brereton, be so kind as to ring the bell, and let the servants eject her. There must have been sad carelessness for her to gain admittance."

"Stop, young man! Stop, Lady Claud De Vesci!" exclaimed Ruth, haughtily, lifting her hand in warning as Stanley was about to obey. "If you would avoid more disgraceful publicity than is necessary to what I am about to reveal it would be wise to forbear till my tale is told. Then, should you venture to question it, you can turn me from your doors, and let the whole world know what may otherwise be veiled in at least some degree of mystery."

Pauline had turned very white at the first sudden shock of the woman's words; but the hitherto unsuspected strength of her character asserted itself as the sneering words came on her ear, and she stepped forward between her aunt and the insolent intruder with a dignity that was far more impressive than passion.

"Let her go on, aunt. Truth should be spoken; and falsehood cannot harm the innocent. Speak, and be brief and clear, if you have really anything to tell," she added to the astonished Ruth. "You have chosen an unfitting time, but we will hear you to the end."

Quentin Oliphant gazed in surprise at the "princess" mien of that gentle girl, whose bearing he had criticized as too girlish and playful for her high station, and Stanley Brereton, even in his indignant sympathy with his worshipped idol, felt a proud exultation in her worthiness of his reverent homage.

"You brave it well, young lady," said Ruth, with an irritated bitterness of tone. "It remains to be seen how your pride will bear the truth that awaits you. But you shall be obeyed. I will speak to the point, and briefly as words can serve the purpose. You have no more title to the rank and wealth you have usurped than I have, and the Queen has bestowed her royal smile on an impostor. Will that be to your taste? Have I obeyed your command, my proud dame?"

Pauline shrank back in terror towards the side of her lover at the ominous words. Not that she really believed their purport, but that the impression seized her of the dangerous insanity of the speaker.

But Stanley Brereton indignantly stepped forward ere the petrified group recovered breath to question her assertion.

"This is simply madness, woman, and unless you have strong and sufficient proof you are rendering yourself liable to severe punishment. I am a barrister, and shall at once put the penalties in force against you for the outrage."

"Spare yourself the trouble, young man," said the woman, coolly. "If you were a judge it could make no difference to me, or this young woman. I tell you that I am perfectly prepared to prove that Pauline, the supposed heiress of the De Vescis, has no claim to the name she bears; that the late countess never had a child, either male or female; and that this young girl was obtained when a new-born babe, and passed off, by a shameful fraud, as the infant daughter of the Earl and Countess of Mont Sorell."

(To be continued.)

## THE MYSTIC EYE OF HEATHCOTE.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

The summer was over. The oaks in the park and around the lodge gates had already put on their autumn livery.

Within the Abbey all was luxury and glitter, for the preparations for Lady Heathcote's marriage were quite complete. The entire building, save that ghostly western wing, to which were attached the ruins of the old convent, had been thoroughly renovated. Lady Heathcote's suite of apartments was a perfect marvel, and the bridal chamber a temple of artistic elegance and magnificence.

And on this chilly, dreary October evening the grand event was to come off.

The Abbey was filled with guests, and every hour they were arriving from London and Paris and different parts of the country. It was a whim of Lady

Heathcote to be married at the Abbey, and start on the morrow for London, Rome, and Venice.

There was to be a grand entertainment for the guests, and, out in the park of the Abbey, a banquet for the peasantry.

By early dusk, despite scudding clouds and wailing blasts, the park was crowded, and the roll of carriages was incessant. At her window my lady sat, looking down with flashing eyes on the groups congregating in honour of her wedding night—she who could hold up her queenly head amid the proudest of England's proud daughters. It was a moment of exquisite triumph for this woman—this daughter of wild blood, who had once tented with her tribe on Lislewood Heath, and who, ever since those early days of passion and wrong, had been labouring for one steadfast purpose—to become the wife of the man who had betrayed her, the man she loved.

And now her hour was at hand. For, riding up through the dreary twilight, doffing his hat and speaking to one and another, came the handsome Indian officer, sitting his pet mare like a born king. And the lady of Heathcote Abbey, gazing down upon him, felt her eyes swim in tears, and her heart leap and flutter, just as it used to do in those far-back days when this man, a young hussar of the Queen's Guards, had first won her love under the summer skies that hung over Lislewood Heath.

But on this, his wedding eve, the colonel's face wore a bitter, disappointed look, and he sprang to the ground, and threw his reins to the groom with the air of a man considerably out of temper. To tell the truth, our colonel had only just returned from a flying visit to the old Alpine castle.

He had gone up, only three days before his contemplated marriage, to offer her a last chance for life; and if she had accepted his offer she would have come to England as our colonel's wife, to the indescribable discomfiture of Lady Heathcote. A wondrously cool and cruel-hearted man, this handsome colonel!

But the interview he had with the lovely young captive was anything but encouraging; and with the silvery echo of her scornful voice still sounding in his ears he rode up the Abbey avenue that dismal evening. But on the morrow he would be lord of Heathcote Abbey—that was some consolation.

He made his wedding toilet, and crossed over to the boudoir of his bride. She was awaiting his coming in the midst of her attendants, regal and glorious as Egypt's queen when she sailed out to meet Marc Antony.

Colonel Hershaw smiled when she advanced to meet him, a smile of genuine content, for in the glitter of her costly bridal robes her beauty was something to be wondered at.

"By Jove!" he ejaculated, "you really dazzle a fellow's eyes, Carlotta. How you women ever get yourselves up in such gorgeous style passes my knowledge."

Lady Heathcote laughed gaily, and pretty Maud Delmar, who was one of the bridesmaids, cried out, in mock indignation:

"You naughty colonel, is that the prettiest speech you can make, and you about to wed the handsomest woman in England? If I were Lady Heathcote I would discard you on the spot."

"Would you?" retorted the colonel, with a sly wink—"if instead of my humble self I chanced to be the young Duke of Connaught?"

Maud flushed rosy red, and pouted and tossed her curls in a pretty, coquettish manner, and, being summoned at that moment, the glittering party swept down the marble staircase and filed into the great drawing-room, where the bishop stood ready to make them man and wife.

Colonel Hershaw stood like a statue, his handsome head erect, his eye like an eagle's, and the lovely woman at his side cast down her eyes, thrilling to her heart's core with happiness.

The impressive ceremony was begun, the bride was given away by St. Denys Delmar, and Colonel Hershaw was just in the act of putting the ring upon the finger of his bride, when there came a shriek that curdled the blood of all who heard it.

"Oh, Heaven! my lady, look there!"

It was Mrs. Chudleigh's voice, and Lady Heathcote looked up, and her answering shriek was even more terrible.

Right before her eyes, not ten paces from the bishop's right hand, ghastly and hideous in the glitter of the swinging chandeliers, stood the Spectre of the Abbey—its white grave-clothes trailing around its skeleton figure, its face pale and awful and unearthly, its eyes burning luridly in their sunken sockets, and from a gaping gash across its throat the dark blood slowly trickling down. For the space of a moment it stood, its awful stare fixed upon the newly wedded pair, and then, lifting one hand with a gesture of warning, it slowly vanished.

Lady Heathcote dropped to the velvet carpet as white and rigid as ever she would be in her grave, and amid the shrieks and confusion of the guests Colonel Hershaw, with an oath upon his lips, dashed straight after the apparition, through the glittering rooms, out into the dim corridor, where he caught sight of the trailing white garments.

"Confound you!" he muttered between his set teeth. "I'll end this foolery for all time."

But right before his eyes, almost within reach of his grasping hands, the ghost fled down the staircase and out upon the balcony, and then in an instant it seemed to vanish through the solid western wall.

The colonel ground his teeth in baffled rage, and beat against the staunch masonry, hoping to find some secret passage, but in vain; and, puzzled and bewildered more than he dared to acknowledge, he returned to the drawing-room.

Lady Heathcote had recovered, and was sitting on a sofa surrounded by a bevy of sympathizing friends, but her face was as white as her robes, and her eyes were still wide with horror.

"Oh, my love," she began as the colonel approached her.

"It was nothing but a miserable trick, played by some hair-brained fellow," he replied. "Let's think no more about it. Come, Carlotta, we are not quite man and wife yet, and I want the knot strong."

His pleasantry brought the surging red to her cheeks and a happy smile to her lips. She took his arm without a word, and the bishop finished the ceremony and pronounced the benediction.

Then the revelry began—dancing and feasting in the Abbey halls—dancing and feasting under the glittering lights that illuminated the park. But in the midst of all, with the red chalice of her triumph brimming over, Lady Heathcote was wretched, and her gaiety was cruelly forced. Wherever her eyes turned—at the glittering festal board, even amid the gleaming splendour of her bridal chamber—she saw that ghastly, spectral face—the hideous death's head of her wedding-feast.

### CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE return of Carlos Brignoli at this juncture, and the announcement made to him by Mrs. Telfer that Lady Grace was dead and buried, we have narrated in a previous chapter, as well as the circumstances under which the cobbler, through the instrumentality of Janet, his niece, had obtained admission, after long months of patient watching, into the old Alpine castle.

We left the cobbler and Father Anselm confronting each other before the door of the prisoner's dungeon.

For a minute's space the two men faced each other in breathless amazement. Then the monk, frantic with fear at the peril that menaced him, seized the cobbler by the shoulder.

"What are you doing here, you scoundrel?" he thundered.

"I'm about to free the woman you've had shut up in this black den for more than half a year," replied the Cornishman. "Take your hand off my arm, and stand aside, or I'll break every bone in your worthless body."

But the monk sprang at his throat with the rage of a wild beast. To lose now was death and dishonour.

An imprecation hissed through his set teeth, while his cowl fell back, disclosing his fendish face.

"I'll have your heart's blood! I'll teach you to meddle with my affairs!" he said, fiercely.

"Stand in one corner, Janie, and hold the light steady, and don't be scared," said the cobbler, quietly, addressing his niece, and holding off his antagonist with one brawny arm.

Almost before he had uttered the words he and the monk grappled each other in a deadly struggle.

The girl withdrew a pace, and stood still and calm, holding the light aloft, her face white, and her eyes like diamonds.

For ten minutes the two men fought like tigers, and neither seemed to gain any advantage over the other.

The colonel was a fine athlete, a scientific boxer, and the Cornish cobbler was an embodiment of strength and stubbornness.

But at last iron muscle began to show its power; the monk fell back a pace or two, steadily followed by his determined enemy, and, after a few parrying thrusts, the cobbler dealt him a stunning blow on the right temple that laid him out straight on the wet flagstones.

"Now then," he continued, stolidly, as he wiped the perspiration from his face, "come, Janet, and we'll proceed with our job. I've settled that chap for this hour and more."

Janet drew near with the light, and the cobbler proceeded to unlock the dungeon door. It swung open with a hoarse creak, and there, in the centre of



the dim apartment, her thin face white with terror, stood Lady Grace.

The stout seaman recoiled with an exclamation of affright, believing that he looked upon a ghost; but Janet advanced fearlessly.

"We have come to set you free," she said, extending her hand to Lady Grace. "Is there any person in here with you?"

The girl shook her head slowly from side to side.

"No," she replied; "I am all alone!"

Then, after one swift glance at Janet's face, she placed her thin little hand in the palm she extended. Janet held it as tenderly as if it had been a little unfledged bird.

"Poor thing!" she murmured, her bright eyes swimming in tears. "How cold and white you are! How dreadfully you must have suffered! Come, Uncle Hendrick, we have no time to lose," she added, turning towards the cobbler.

He stood like one amazed, staring stupidly at the lovely creature before him.

"Who is she?" he muttered; "and where's Margaret?"

"We'll find out who she is by-and-bye," replied Janet. "We see that she has been wronged—let us help her to escape from this vile place!"

"But, Margaret," he continued, clinging to his old fancy, "where is she?"

"Heaven knows!" cried Janet, a trifle impatiently. "Don't you see, uncle, that we have been mistaken? This girl is the prisoner, not Aunt Margaret."

A look of unutterable disappointment filled his eyes.

"Poor Margaret!" he sighed. "I've not found her after all!"

"Come!" called Janet, imperatively, "the keepers will awake—come!"

Lady Grace, having thrown a shawl over her head, followed Janet out into the corridor, and up the steep steps. The cobbler followed also, with that disappointed look still brooding in his eyes.

In less than five minutes' time they were out in the stormy darkness and the heavy iron gate had closed behind them.

"Now," continued Janet, still taking the lead, "we had better run over to your room, and get ourselves ready for the ten-o'clock train. We must be many a mile away before morning."

"Ay, my lass, you are right, and not a minute must we lose," responded the cobbler, giving his shoulders a shake like a huge water-dog. "I'm stunned like at not finding Margaret; but if this young lady wants our help she can have it by asking. Where may your home be, my lady, and where do you want to go to?"

"I've no home, I don't know where to go," sobbed Grace, bursting into tears, the first she had shed since her imprisonment. "I was Grace Heathcote once, and mistress of Heathcote Abbey, but to-night I have not even a roof to shelter me from the storm."

"Heathcote," repeated the cobbler, slowly; "you a Heathcote? Why, I saw the last one of that name buried with my own eyes."

Janet flashed a keen glance at Lady Grace, taking in all her high-bred, aristocratic points in the twinkling of an eye, and with her shrewd, quick wit half comprehended how matters stood.

"Don't stop now for explanations," she cried, "when our very lives are at stake—all can be made clear hereafter. You will go with us, my lady. Come, uncle!"

She gave her arm to Lady Grace, and hurried on, the cobbler following in a state of bewildered perplexity and disappointment.

An hour later, while the winds roared amid the mountain summits, and the sleet beat against the windows, they sped along on their way as fast as steam could carry them.

Some time during the watches of that eventful night Colonel Ludovic Hershaw, the newly wedded bridegroom, recovered his wife and gathered himself up from the slimy flagstones, in a state of mind and body that was anything but pleasant. His first act was to explore his surroundings, and he found himself utterly alone, the door of his prison wide open, and his prisoner gone.

The colonel stared in terror, then he tore through the hall and up the steep steps like a madman. At Antonio's door he paused, and pounded lustily. But no one answered, and the colonel, growing wrathful and desperate, smashed the door in.

What a sight met his eyes! Antonio lying like a log beneath the table, and his wife stretched across her chair, both drugged, or dead, he did not tarry to determine which.

Convinced that his plot had been discovered, and quaking in his boots with apprehension, the gallant officer fled away, leaving his confederates to their fate, and in a very brief space of time, he too had left

the looming mountain peaks behind him, and was speeding through the stormy darkness on his way to Florence, where his impatient bride awaited his return.

The colonel had come up to the old Alpine castle with a special purpose, leaving his bride and her wedding attendants at Florence. He had found it a better thing than he anticipated to be my lady's husband and lord of Heathcote Abbey. He had plenty of money, and no youthful bride was ever more obedient or more devoted.

So the colonel made up his mind that he had done a good thing; and determined to make his new position altogether safe.

The colonel was somewhat vain, and he felt very bitter and resentful in regard to his last visit to the Alpine tower. The haughty young peeress had defied and insulted him in the most unbearable manner.

"She has chosen her fate, and she shall have it," he mused; "it is better to make things safe at once—the grave tells no secrets, and a sprinkle of white powder in her chocolate will do the work. I'll run down to-morrow and give Antonio his instructions."

Accordingly, making some business engagement his excuse, he left his bride at Florence, and ran over, with what result we already know.

At the very last moment his victim had escaped him. How bitterly he reproached himself for having spared her life so long! At any moment she might confront him now, and wrest the Heathcote heritage from his grasp, and, worse, consign him to infamy and punishment. So the colonel's cup of wedded bliss was embittered at the very outset, and he went back to Florence feeling miserably apprehensive.

Meantime our Cornish cobbler journeyed down to Cornwall, taking the two girls with him.

Once established in the old farm-house that overlooked the rugged coast, Grace told her strange story; and Hendrick and his sister, a pale and sad but still beautiful woman, learned with no little amazement that their guest was the self-same little Grace whose praises they had heard from poor Margaret's fond lips so many times.

"How very strange it is," said the pale woman, who was Janet's mother. "I have known Margaret sit and talk of you by the hour—how dearly she loved you!"

Grace's blue eyes overflowed with tears.

"Yes," she replied, "poor, kind auntie, she was the truest friend I ever had. I have always had a fancy that she would come back to me again; I am sure she will if she is still alive, and I don't think she's dead."

Janet's mother shook her head sadly, but Janet herself burst out, impetuously:

"You are right, my lady, she's not dead—they would not be likely to kill her when she held the secret of that wonderful old opal ring, and all the hidden Heathcote wealth. I've heard the story over and over, and I don't believe she's dead."

"But she held another secret," continued Janet's mother, "a secret of Lady Heathcote's, and I am afraid it has cost her her life. Lady Heathcote would risk a great deal rather than have that secret revealed. It came to Margaret's knowledge a number of years ago, and because of a feeling of—of—resentment," she continued, stammering with embarrassment, and colouring painfully, "towards the parties it concerned, poor Margaret declared she would never reveal it, but let the wrong go unrighted. It was a bitter wrong, and Margaret repented of her revengeful feelings, and determined to reveal the whole truth. She told me so the very last time I ever saw her, and in two days after she had disappeared. Lady Heathcote had heard of it somehow, and poor Margaret was made away with."

Lady Grace had listened intently, her face growing rigid with horror.

"Do you know what the secret was?" she asked. The woman inclined her head.

"I know," she continued; "but no one else in the wide world does, not even Hendrick or Janet. Margaret told me, and she made me promise not to tell, but, if we find she's dead, I shall break my promise."

"She's not dead," put in Janet, confidently. "We'll discover her yet, won't we, uncle? See how safe they thought they had Lady Grace caged, and we're freed her. Oh, dear, I would have liked to see Antonio when he waked up—what a snug nap he had to be sure," and her merry laughter rang out clear as a chime of bells.

"I'm going back to-morrow," said the cobbler. "I must keep my eye on that pretentious priest; he's at the bottom of the whole mess."

"He is a wicked, dangerous man—you had better be on your guard," suggested Lady Grace.

The seaman's yellow eyes blazed.

"I think I'm a match for him," he said, quietly.

A moment after he added: "And providing there be anything I can be a doing for you, my leddy, I've plenty of time on my hands and be willing—ye've only to say the word."

"I don't see what I can do," Grace said, thoughtfully. "I can't go back to Heathcote now and alone—I shall never assert my rights—let Lady Heathcote keep what she has so long coveted. If I went back they would murder me, or, worse, marry me to Lord Remington. I have not a friend in the world, and I have been so happy and so quiet since I came here," she continued, glancing timidly towards Janet and her mother, "if you would be willing to let me stay, if only for a little while; I'll work as Janet does, and I can make enough by my embroidery to—"

"To do what? Feed you, you poor, little white bird?" cried Janet, catching her in her arms. "We'll give you what little mite you want, and glad to have you, won't we, mother? won't we, uncle? To be sure, you'll stay with us till—well, till uncle finds auntie, then you shall be restored to Heathcote, and married to a young prince, and wear the famous old opal for your wedding-ring, and it will all end like a fairy-tale, you'll see."

And rosy-cheeked Janet burst into tears over the charming picture she had portrayed.

So it was all settled, and Lady Grace was cosily established for the winter in the old farm-house that overlooked the Cornish coast.

(To be continued.)

## A DARING GAME OR, NEVA'S THREE LOVERS.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

COULD her guardian angel have whispered to Neva that her father did indeed still live, and that at the very moment of her vivid dream he stood upon the verandah of Major Archer's Indian bungalow, weak, wasted and weary, but with the principle of life strong within him, what agony she might have been spared in the near future; what terrors and perils she might perhaps have escaped!

But she did not know it—she could not guess that life held for her a joy so rare, so pure, so sweet, as that of welcoming back to his home her father so long and bitterly mourned as dead.

As we have said, she remained awake during the remainder of the night, walking her floor in her white gown and slippers feet, now and then wringing her hands, or sobbing softly, or crying silently; and thus the weary hours dragged by.

Before the clear sunlight of the soft September morning, which stole at last into her pleasant rooms, Neva's dream lost its vividness and semblance of reality, and the conviction settled down upon her soul that it was indeed "only a dream."

She dressed herself for breakfast in a morning robe of white, with cherry-coloured ribbons, but her face was very pale, and there was a look of unrest in her red-brown eyes when she descended slowly and wearily to the breakfast-room at a later hour than usual.

This room faced the morning sun, and was octagon shaped, one half of the octagon projecting from the house wall, and being set with sashes of French plate-glass, like a gigantic bay-window. One of the glazed sections opened like a door upon the eastern marble terrace, with its broad surface, its carved balustrade, and its rows of rare trees and shrubs in portable tubs.

There was no one in the room when Neva entered it. The large table was laid with covers for five persons. The glazed door was ajar, and the windows were all open, giving ingress to the fresh morning air. The room was all brightness and cheerfulness, the soft gray carpet having a border of scarlet and gold, the massive antique chairs being upholstered in scarlet leather, and the somberness of the dainty buffet of ebony wood being relieved by delicate tracery of gold, drawn by a skillful hand.

Neva crossed the floor and passed out upon the terrace, where a gaudy peacock strutted, spreading his fan in the sunlight, and giving utterance to his harsh notes of self-satisfaction. Neva paced slowly up and down the terrace, shading her face with her hand. A little later she heard some one emerge from the breakfast-room upon the terrace, and come behind her with an irregular and unsteady tread.

"Good-morning, Miss Neva," said Rufus Black as he gained her side. "A lovely morning, is it not?"

Neva returned his salutation gravely. She knew that Rufus Black had slept under the same roof with herself the preceding night, after the ball, and that a room at Hawkhurst had been specially assigned him by Lady Wynde, now Mrs. Craven Black.

"You ought to have sacrificed your scruples and come down to the drawing-rooms last night," said

Rufus Black. "I assure you we had a delightful time, but you would have been the star of the ball. I watched the door for your appearance until the people began to go home, and I never danced, although there was no end of pretty girls, but they were not pretty for me," added Rufus, sighing. "There is for me now only one beautiful girl in the whole world, and you are she, sweet Neva."

"Did you ever love any one before you loved me?" asked Neva, with a quiet frankness and straightforwardness, looking up at him with her clear eyes full of dusky glow.

"Ye—no!" stammered Rufus, turning suddenly pale, and his honest eyes blenching. "Almost every man has had his boyish fancies, Miss Neva. Whatever mine may have been, my life has been sustained, and my heart is all your own. You believe me?"

"Yes, I believe you. Mr. and Mrs. Black have come down to breakfast, Mr. Rufus. Let us go in."

She led the way back to the breakfast-room, Rufus following. They found the bride and bridegroom and Mrs. Arriens waiting for them. Neva greeted Lady Wynde by her new name, and bowed quietly to Craven Black and Mrs. Arriens. The little party took seats at the table, and the portly butler, with a mute protest in his heart against the new master of Hawkhurst, waited upon them, assisted by skillful subordinates.

Mrs. Craven Black, dressed in white, looked the incarnation of satisfaction. She had so far succeeded in the daring game she had been playing, and her jet-black eyes glittered, and her dark cheeks were flushed to crimson, and her manner was full of feverish gaiety, as she did the honors of the Hawkhurst breakfast table to her new husband.

Three years before she had been a poor adventuress, unable to marry the man she loved. Now, through the success of a daring and terrible conspiracy, she was wealthy, the real and nominal mistress of one of the grandest seats in England; the personal guardian of one of the richest heiresses in the kingdom, and the wife of her fellow-conspirator, to obey whose behests, and to marry whom, she had been willing to peril her soul's salvation.

Only one thing remained to render her triumph perfect, her fortune magnificent, and her success assured. Only one move remained to be played, and her game would be fully won.

That move comprehended the marriage of Neva Wynde to Rufus Black, and Mrs. Craven Black, from the moment of her third marriage, resolved to devote all her energies to the task of bringing about the union upon which she was determined.

Neva went to the music-room after breakfast, and began to play a weird melody, in which her very soul seemed to find utterance. In the midst of her abstraction the door opened, and Rufus Black came in softly.

"Your music sounds like a lament, or a dirge," said Rufus, leaning upon the piano, and regarding with admiration the pale, rapt face and glowing eyes.

"I meant it so," said Neva. "I was thinking of my father."

"Ah," said Rufus, rather vacantly.

"I dreamed of papa last night," said Neva, softly, resting her elbow on the crumpling keys and laying one rounded cheek upon her pink palm. "I dreamed he was alive, Rufus, and that I saw him standing before the door of an Indian hut, or bungalow, or curious dwelling; and my dream was like a vision."

"A rather uncomfortable one," suggested Rufus. "You were greatly excited yesterday, Neva; I could see that; and, as your mind was all stirred up concerning your father, you naturally dreamed of him. It would make a horrid row if your dream could only turn out true, and you ought to rejoice that it cannot. You have mourned for him, and the edge of your grief has worn off—"

"No, no, it has not," interrupted the girl's passionate young voice. "If I had seen him die I could have been reconciled to the will of Heaven. But to lose him in that awful manner—never to know how much he suffered during the moments when he was struggling in the claws of that deadly tiger—oh, it seems at times more than I can bear! To think how soon he has been forgotten! and Neva's voice trembled. "His wife whom he idolized has married another, and his friends and tenants have danced and made merry at her wedding. Of all who knew and loved him only his daughter still mourns at his awful fate!"

"It is hard," assented Rufus, "but it's the way of the world, you know. If it will comfort you any, Neva, I will tell you that half the county families came to the wedding breakfast to support and cheer you by their presence, and the other half came out of sheer curiosity. But few of the best families remained to the ball."

"Papa thought much of you, did he not, Rufus?" asked Neva, thinking of that skillfully forged letter which was hidden in her bosom, and which purported to be her father's last letter to her from India.

Rufus Black had been warned by his father that Neva might some day thus question him, and Craven Black had told his son that he must answer the heiress in the affirmative. Rufus was weak of will, cowardly, and timid, but it was not in him to be deliberately dishonest. He could not be to the young girl whose truthful eyes sought his own.

"I had no personal acquaintance with Sir Harold Wynde, Neva," the young man said, inwardly quaking, yet daring to tell the truth.

"But—but—papa said—I don't really comprehend, Rufus. I thought that papa loved you."

"If Sir Harold ever saw me I do not know it," said Rufus, cruelly embarrassed, and wondering if his honesty would not prove his ruin. "I was at the University—Sir Harold may have seen me, and taken a liking to me—"

Neva looked strangely perplexed and troubled. Certainly the awkward statement of Rufus did not agree with the supposed last declaration of her father.

"There seems some mystery here which I cannot fathom," she said. "I have a letter written by papa in India, under the terrible foreboding that he would die there, and in this letter papa speaks of you with affection, and says—and says—"

She paused, her blushes amply completing the sentence.

A cold shiver passed over the form of Rufus. He comprehended the cause of Neva's blushes, and a portion of his father's villany. He understood that the letter of which Neva spoke had been forged by Craven Black, and that it commanded Neva's marriage with Craven Black's son. What could he say? What should he do? His innate cowardice prevented him from confessing the truth, and his awe of his father prevented him from betraying him, and he could only tremble and blush and pale alternately.

"Papa might have taken an interest in you without making himself known to you," suggested Neva, after a brief pause. "Some act of yours might have made your name known to him, and he might secretly have watched your course without betraying to you his interest in you, might he not?"

"He might," said Rufus, huskily.

"I can explain the matter in no other way. It is singular. Perhaps poor papa might not have well known what he was writing, but the letter is so clearly written that that idea is not tenable. After all, so long as he wrote the letter what does it matter?" said Neva wearily. "He must have known you, Rufus—or else the letter was forged!"

Rufus averted his face, upon which a cold glow was starting.

"Who would have forged it?" he asked, hoarsely.

"That I do not know. I know no one base enough for such a deed. It could not have been forged, of course, Rufus, but the discrepancy between your statement and that in the letter makes me naturally doubt. Papa was the most truthful of men. He hated a falsehood, and was so punctilious in regard to the truth that he was always painfully exact in his statements. He trained me to love truth, and was even particular about the slightest error in repeating a story. How then could he speak of knowing you? Perhaps, though, I am mistaken. I may find, on referring to the letter, that he speaks of liking you and taking an interest in you, without alluding to a personal acquaintance."

"If I had known Sir Harold I should have tried to deserve his good opinion," said Rufus, his voice trembling. "I have the greatest reverence for his character, and I wish I might be like him."

"There are few like papa," said Neva, a sudden glow transfiguring her face.

"How you loved him, Neva. If I had had such a father!" and Rufus sighed. "I would rather have an honourable, affectionate father whom I could revere and trust than to have a million of money."

Neva reached out her hand in sympathy, and the young man seized it eagerly, clinging to it.

"Neva," he exclaimed, with a sudden energy of passion, "it is more than a month since I asked you to be my wife, and you have not yet given me my answer. Will you give it to me now?"

The girl withdrew her hand gently, and rested her cheek again on her hand.

"I know I am not worthy of you," said Rufus, beseechingly. "I am poor in fortune, weak of character, a piece of drift-wood blown hither and thither by adverse winds and likely to be tossed on a rocky shore at last, if you do not have pity upon me. Neva, such as I am, I beseech you to save me!"

"I am powerless to save any one," said Neva, gently. "Your help must come from above, Rufus."

"I want an earthly arm to cling to," pleaded Rufus,

his tones growing shrill with the sudden fear that she would reject him. "I have in me all noble impulses, Neva; I have in me the ability to become such a man as was your father. I would foster all noble enterprises; I would become great for your sake. I would study my art and make a name of which you should be proud. Will you stoop from your high estate, Neva, and have pity upon a weak, cowardly soul that longs to be strong and brave? Will you smile upon my great love for you, and let me devote my life to your happiness and comfort?"

His wild eyes looked into hers with a prayerfulness that went to her soul. He seemed to regard her as his earthly saviour—and such indeed, if she accepted him, she would be, for she would bring him fortune, and what he valued more, her affection, her pure life, her brave soul, on which his own weak nature might be stayed.

"Poor Rufus!" said Neva, with the tenderness that a sister might have shown him. "My poor boy," and her small face beamed with sisterly kindness upon the tall, awkward fellow, the words coming strangely from her lips. "I am sorry for you."

"And you will marry me?" he cried, eagerly.

The young face became grave almost to sternness. The lovely eyes gloomed over with a great shadow.

"I want to obey papa's wishes as if they were commands," she said. "I have thought and prayed day after day and night after night. I like you, Rufus, and I cannot hear your appeals unmoved. I believe I am not selfish if I am true to my higher nature, and obey the instincts Heaven has implanted in my soul. I must be untrue to Heaven, to myself, and to my own instincts, or I must pay no heed to that last letter and to the last wishes of poor papa. Which shall I do? I have decided first one way, and then the other. The possibility that that letter was—was not written by papa—and there is such a possibility—I cannot now help but consider. Forgive me, Rufus, but I have decided, and I think papa, who has looked down from heaven upon my perplexity and my anguish, must approve my course. I feel that I am doing right when I say, 'here her hand took his, 'that—that I cannot marry you.'"

"Not marry me! Oh, Neva!"

"It costs me much to say it, Rufus, but I must be true to myself, to my principles of honour. I do not love you as a wife should love her husband. I could not stand up before my Maker's altar and my Maker's minister, and perjure myself by saying that I thus loved you. No, Rufus, no; it may not be!"

Rufus bowed his head upon the piano, and sobbed aloud.

His weakness appealed to the girl's strength. She had seldom seen a man in tears, and her own tears began to flow in sympathy.

"I am so sorry, Rufus," she whispered.

"But you will not save me? You will not lift a hand to save me from perdition?"

"I will be your sister, Rufus."

"Until you become some other man's wife?" cried Rufus, full of jealous anguish. "You will marry some other man—Lord Towyn, perhaps?"

The girl retreated a few steps, a red glory on her features. A strange, sweet shyness shone in her eyes.

"I see!" exclaimed Rufus, in a passion of grief and jealousy. "You will marry Lord Towyn? Oh, Neva! Neva!"

"Rufus, it cannot matter to you whom I marry since I cannot marry you. Let us be friends—brother and sister—"

"I will be all to you or nothing?" ejaculated Rufus, violently. "I will marry you or die!"

He broke from the grasp she laid upon him, and with a wild cry upon his lips dashed from the room.

In the hall he encountered Craven Black and his bride, just come in from the garden. He would have brushed past them unseeing, unheeding, but his father, seeing his excitement and agitation, grasped his arm forcibly, arresting his progress.

"What's the matter?" demanded Craven Black, fiercely. "What's up?"

"I'm going to kill myself!" returned Rufus, shrilly, trying to break loose from that strong, unyielding clasp. "It's all over. Neva has refused me, and turned me adrift. She is going to marry Lord Towyn!"

"Oh, is she?" said Craven Black, mockingly. "We'll see about that."

"We will see!" said Neva's step-mother, with a cruel and fierce compression of her lips. "I am Miss Wynde's guardian. We will see if she dare disobey her father's, often-repeated injunctions to obey me! If she do refuse she shall feel my power!"

"Defeat your suicide until you see how the thing turns out, my son," said Craven Black, with a little sneer. "Go to your room and dry your tears before the servants laugh at you."



Rufus Black slunk away, miserable, yet with reviving hope. Perhaps the matter was not ended yet. Perhaps Neva would reconsider her decision. As he disappeared up the staircase Mrs. Craven Black laid her hand on her bridegroom's arm, and whispered:

"The girl will prove restive. We shall have trouble with her. If we mean to force her into this marriage we must first of all get her away from her friends. Where shall we take her? How shall we deal with her?"

## CHAPTER XXIV.

NEARLY six weeks had intervened between Rufus Black's proposal of marriage to Neva Wynde on the road-side bank and his final rejection by her in the music-room at Hawkhurst.

It will be remembered that there had been a hidden witness to the half-despairing, half-loving proposal of Rufus, and that this hidden witness, seeing, but unseen, was no other than the wronged young wife whom Rufus Black mourned as dead, and whom in his soul he loved a thousand-fold better than the beautiful young heiress.

During the six weeks that had passed what had become of Lally—poor, heart-broken, despairing Lally?

We have narrated how she staggered away in the night gloom, after seeing Rufus and Neva together in the square of light from the house windows upon the marble terrace, not knowing whither she went, but hurrying as swiftly as she might from her young husband, from happiness, and from hope itself.

For an hour or two she tottered on, but at last, wearied to exhaustion, she sank down in the shelter of a wayside hedge, and sobbed and moaned herself to sleep.

She was awake again at daybreak, and hurried up and on, as if flying from pursuit. About seven o'clock she came to a hop-garden, divided from the road by wooden palings. There were men and women, of the tramp species, busy at work here under the supervision of the hop farmer.

Lally halted and clung to the palings with both hands, and looked through the interstices upon the busy groups with dilating eyes.

The hop-pickers, many of them tramps who lived in unions and almshouses in the winter, and who stray down into Kent during the hop season, presently discovered the white and hungry face pressed against the palings, and jeered at the girl, and called her names she could not understand, making merry at her forlornness.

The hop raiser heard them, and, discovering the object of their rude merriment, came forward, opened a gate in the palings, and hailed the girl. He was short of hands, he said, and would give her sixpence a day, and food and drink, if she chose to help in the hop picking.

Lally nodded assent, and crept by the gate, and into the presence of those who mocked at her. Her eyes were so wild, her manner so strange and still, that the workers stared at her in wonder, whispered among themselves, discovering that she was not of their kind, and turned their backs upon her.

Lally worked with feverish energy, trying—ah, how vainly!—to escape from her thoughts, and she did the work of two persons. She had bread and cheese and a glass of ale at noon, and a similar allowance of food for supper.

That night she slept in a barn with the women tramps, but chose a remote corner, where she buried herself in the hay, and slept peacefully.

The next day she would have wandered on in her unrest, but the farmer, discovering her intention, offered her a shilling a day, and she consented to remain. That night she again slept in her remote corner of the barn, and no one spoke to her or molested her.

For a week Lally kept up this toil, labouring in the hop-fields by day, and sleeping in a barn at night. At the end of that period, the work being finished, she was no longer wanted, and she went her way, resuming her weary tramp, with six shillings and sixpence in her pocket.

For the next fortnight she worked in various hop-fields, paying nothing for food or lodging. Her pay was better too, she earning a sovereign in the two weeks.

Three weeks after overhearing Rufus solicit the hand of Miss Wynde in marriage Lally found herself at Canterbury, shoeless and ragged, a very picture of destitution. Her first act was to purchase a pair of shoes, a ready-made print dress and a thin shawl. Her purchases were all of the cheapest description, not costing her over five shillings. She added to the list a round hat of coarse straw, around which she tied a dark blue ribbon.

She found a cheap lodging in the town, and here put on her new clothes. The lodging was an attic

room, with a dormer window, close up under the eaves of a humble brick dwelling. There was no carpet on her floor, and the furniture comprised only an iron bedstead, a chair, and a table. The house was rented by a tailor, who used the ground floor for his shop and residence, and sub-let the upper rooms to a half-dozen different families. The three attic rooms were let to women, Lally being one, and two thin, consumptive seamstresses occupying the others.

It was necessary for Lally to find employment without delay, and she inserted an advertisement in one of the local papers, soliciting a position as nursery governess. She had the written recommendation of her former employers, the superintendents of a lady's school, and with this she hoped to secure a situation.

Her advertisement was repeated for three days without result. Upon the fourth day, as she was counting her slender store of money, and wondering what she was to do when that was gone, the postman's knock was heard on the private door below, and presently the tailor's little boy came to Lally's room bringing a letter.

She tore it open eagerly. It was dated Sandy Lands, and was written in a painfully minute style of penmanship, with faint and spidery letters. The writer was a lady, signing herself Mrs. Blight. She stated that she had a family of nine children, five of whom were young enough to require the services of a nursery governess. If "L. B."—the initials Lally had appended to her advertisement—could give satisfactory references, was an accomplished musician, spoke French and German, and was well versed in the English grammar, she might call at Sandy Lands upon the following morning at ten o'clock.

Accordingly the next morning Lally sat out in a cab for Sandy Lands, whose location Mrs. Blight had described with sufficient accuracy. It was situated in one of the fashionable suburbs of the old cathedral town. Lally expected from the grandeur of its name to find a large and handsome estate, but found instead a part little villa, close to the road, and separated from it by a high brick wall in which was a wooden gate. The domain of Sandy Lands comprised a half-acre of rather sterile soil in which a few larches struggled for existence, and an acacia and a lime tree led a sickly life.

The little villa, with plate-glass windows, green parlour shutters drawn half-way up, a gabled roof, from which three sashy little dormer windows protruded, was unmistakably the house of which Lally was in search, for on one side of the gate, over a slit in the wall required for the proper use of the letter-box, was the legend, in bright gilt letters, "Sandy Lands."

The cabman alighted and rang the garden bell. A smart-looking housemaid with white cap and a white apron answered the call. Lally alighted and inquired if Mrs. Blight were at home. The smart housemaid eyed the humbly clad stranger rather contemptuously, and remarked that she could not be sure; Mrs. Blight might be at home, and then again she might not.

"I received a letter from her telling me to call at this hour," said Lally, with what dignity she could summon. "I am seeking a situation as nursery governess."

"Oh, then, missus is at home," replied the housemaid. "You can come in, miss."

Bidding the cabman wait, Lally followed the servant across the garden to a rear porch, and was ushered into a small, over-furnished reception room.

"What name shall I say, miss?" asked the maid, pausing in the act of withdrawal.

"Miss Bird," answered poor Lally, who had relinquished her young husband's name, believing that she had no longer any right to it.

The maid went out, and was absent nearly twenty minutes. Lally began to think herself forgotten, and grew nervous, and engaged in a mental computation of her cabman's probable charges. The maid finally appeared, however, and announced that "missus was in her boudoir, and would see the young person."

Lally was conducted upstairs to a front room overlooking the road. This room, like the one below, was over-furnished. The wide window opened upon a balcony, and before it, half reclining upon a silken couch, was a lady in a heavy purple silk gown, and a profusion of jewellery—a lady, short, stout, and red-visaged, with a nose much turned up at the end, and so ruddy as to induce one to think it in a state of inflammation.

"Miss Bird!" announced the maid, abruptly, flinging in the words like a discharge of shot, and retired precipitately.

Mrs. Blight turned her gaze upon Lally in a languid curiosity, and waved her hand condescendingly, as an intimation that the "young person" might be seated.

Lally sat down.

Mrs. Blight then raised a pair of gold-mounted eye-glasses to her nose, and scrutinized Lally more

closely, after what she deemed a very high-bred and nonchalant fashion indeed.

She beheld an humbly dressed girl, not past seventeen, but looking younger, with a face as brown as a berry and velvet-black eyes, which were strangely pathetic and sorrowful—a girl who had known trouble evidently, but who was good and innocent, as one might see at a glance.

"Ah, is your name Bird?" asked Mrs. Blight, languidly. "Seems as if I had heard the name somewhere, but I can't be sure. Of course you have brought references, Miss Bird?"

"I have only a recommendation signed by ladies in whose service I have been," said Lally. "I have been a music-teacher, but I possess the other accomplishments you require."

She drew forth the little worn slip of paper which she had guarded as of more value to her than money, because it declared her respectable and a competent music-teacher, and gave it into the lady's fat hands.

"It is not dated very lately," said Mrs. Blight. "How am I to know that this recommendation is not a forgery? People do forge such things, I hear. Why, a friend of mine took a footman on a forged recommendation, and he ran away and took all her silver."

Lally's honest cheeks flushed, and her heart swelled. She would have arisen, but that the lady motioned to her to remain her seat, and so long as there was a prospect that she might secure the situation Lally would remain.

"The recommendation looks all right," continued Mrs. Blight, scanning it with her glass, while she held it afar off, and daintily between two fingers, as if it were a thing unclean. "You look honest too, but appearances are so deceiving; I had a nurse girl once who looked like a Madonna, and as if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth, but she turned out a perfect mix, artificial as a cat. What salary do you expect?"

"I—I don't know, madam. I have never been employed as nursery governess."

"My husband allows me forty pounds a year for the salary of the governess," said Mrs. Blight. "But, of course, forty pounds ought to get a governess with the best of references. You are inexperienced, as you confess. Now I will take the risk of your turning out bad; if you should decide to remain with me as governess to my five children, at a salary of twenty pounds a year, washing included."

It was "Dobson's choice—that or none"—to poor Lally. Twenty pounds a year, and to be sheltered and fed and warmed besides, seemed very liberal after her recent terrible struggle with the vulture of starvation.

"I will accept it, Mrs. Blight," she said, her voice trembling—"that is, if you will take me when you know that I have only the clothes I stand in, and that for a few weeks I shall need my pay weekly to provide me with decent garments."

"Oh, as to that," said Mrs. Blight, "your clothes are poor, beggarly, I might say. They will have to be improved at once. I will advance you a quarter's salary, five pounds, if you are quite sure you will use it for clothes, and that you do not intend to cheat me out of my money. You see I always speak plainly. My governesses are not pampered. They have to earn their money, but that you probably expect to do. I don't know of another lady in Canterbury who would do as I am doing, lending money to a perfect stranger, on a recommendation you may have written yourself. But I am different from other ladies. I am a judge of physiognomy, and am not often deceived in my estimate of people. Why are you out of clothes?"

"I have been out of a situation as teacher for some time," said Lally. "I have the present addresses of the ladies who signed my recommendations, and I beg you to write to them to assure yourself that I have spoken the truth. The addresses are written on the recommendation itself."

"I noticed them, and shall write this very morning," declared Mrs. Blight. "Go now for your clothes, and be back to luncheon. I want to introduce you to the children, who are running wild."

She waved her hand, and Lally with her five pounds in her hand, took her departure. She had found a new home, and one not likely to be pleasant, but it would afford her shelter, and she believed she could bear all things rather than to pass again through the poverty and misery she had known. She little knew that it was the hand of Providence that had brought her to Sandy Lands, and that the acceptance of her present situation was destined to change the entire future current of her existence, and even to affect that of her young husband.

(To be continued.)

A BUTTERFLY of diamonds was presented to Patti in St. Petersburg the other week. It was valued at 35,000 fr.



[THE LAST APPEAL.]

## CLARICE ASHBURTON'S LOVER.

MISS ASHBURTON had been queening it royally for the whole month at Beachcliff. It had been considered rather odd that she should come to this little out-of-the-way place; yet it was a decidedly aristocratic resort, with great, elegant, commodious houses, an invitation to which was considered about as high a compliment as could be paid to a person. The hotel was filled with unexceptionable people. The rides, the rambles, and the bathing, were delightful. It was a nook, where the ocean, with its restless, assailing forces, made a great raid upon the land, hollowing out a bay, and stopped at length from its encroachments by a great craggy headland. Climbing up to the topmost perch rewarded you with a glimpse of that far-off wonder-land where sea and sky met; where, from sunrise till sunset, drifts of weird glory were for ever resolving themselves into strange, suggestive shapes. It was like two worlds, one part of the bay lying northward, with its wild, grand wall, and the other at the south, a long, level shore of beaten sand, sparkling like a flood of silver, set with gems, through the hours of glorious sunshine. They studied nature a little, and pleasure a good deal, at Beachcliff. How was it to be helped when the latter temptation was so strong?

Clarice Ashburton was aware of her power, like all handsome women, and loved to use it. Not that she flirted, exactly—at least, men were never allowed to make love to her in an indiscriminate fashion; yet few had passed her by unscathed. Mrs. Darricott thought her a great attraction, and insisted so strongly upon her spending the summer at Beachcliff that she had given the invitations of hosts of lesser lights a careless refusal.

She was twenty-two now, but, I think, more brilliant than at eighteen. Her beauty had been like a sudden sunrise then; now it was the steady glow of mid-day. No one wondered why she had not mar-

ried, or expressed any fears as to her ultimate destiny; for, besides being a beauty, she was the heiress of fabulous wealth. True, the great Ashburton estate had been the subject of litigation for years, but possession being nine points of the law Mrs. Ashburton and her daughter had little fear. If some distant marriage could be proved, and some particular heir found, their cause would be perilous; but this had never been done, probably never would be.

She and Arnold Stanhope had been rambling over the rocks one August afternoon. The sun was not shining brightly, and the soft gray under-roof of cloud added a tender suggestiveness. The far-off rim of ocean was decked with an occasional sail; the near coast rustled now and then as a flock of gulls flew inland, and the billows sent over a slow, rhythmic murmur, softer now than the tide was going out.

She was bright and piquant—indeed, it was an article of her creed never to allow a *tête-à-tête* to degenerate into foolish sentimentality. So she had pointed his tenderest sentences with her light shaft of merriment, that was too really kind to be ridicule. After a while he had lapsed into silence. At intervals he offered his hand to assist her up or down some declivity, then withdrew it. She had a curious misgiving that his reticence was more dangerous than words, and not unfrequently glanced at him from under her wide-brimmed hat, of which Mrs. Darricott had once said:

"Why, Clarice, you'll make a fright of yourself wearing that thing—they're all out of date."

To which she replied:

"I wear it because I like it, and it saves carrying a parasol."

With that she was left undisturbed. I incline to the opinion that the hat was a strong ally. It seemed to make a cool shade about her face, to tone down the glowing colours and rich contrasts. For the soft, creamy skin took on bewildering ripeness at the cheeks and mouth. The lips were vivid, full of curves, and

every time she moved them seemed to wake some half-asleep smile. No one ever agreed about her eyes. They always developed tints as emotion demanded, but in ordinary moods they were a soft, lustrous gray, deep as the last rays of twilight. Her hair had a similar peculiarity also, and, though it was rich, dark, and abundant, was not glossy.

Arnold Stanhope watched his companion narrowly. He had been studying her for the last fortnight, loving her I may as well say, for it had been that after the first five minutes they were together. With a great gasp he had taken in all the situation. She, an acknowledged belle and heiress, he three years her senior, without position, income, or anything that warrants a man marrying with a comfortable conscience—a young *littérateur*, making his way slowly by force of brains that were more solid than brilliant—proud, ambitious, resolved upon conquering a firm foothold in the world's estimation. It was folly to think of her.

Then Stanhope bit his lips with an odd, fiery determination. Since his love for this woman had been born without the slightest volition on his part he would follow whithersoever it led. If he came to the bitter dregs he would quaff even them, having had the snowy foam that blossomed atop of the cup. But she was better to him than he was to himself. I think she discerned the rare, fine soul and considered it too high for her to trifle with.

As for love—well, it had crossed her mind more than once that afternoon that this man was ready to lay the best of his life at her very feet, and let her walk over it. It touched her in a strange, new manner. All this time he had never uttered a word more than the merest friendship and politeness required.

She glanced at him now, and saw a strong, noble, patient face. She had seen many handsomer. A wandering light caught and tangled itself in the chestnut curls, a slender, pale sun ray, peeping out from a rift in the trailing clouds, gave the blue eyes a sort of amber tint, like the first flash of flame. The straight, almost haughty features, the white, even teeth that showed with an occasional smile, the full beard, verging to a deep auburn, the compact figure like an athlete, even the hands betrayed a positive individuality.

She wondered a little what it would be to have a tilt with such a man. Suppose she should not come off victor? What if he had a heart?

"How silent you have grown, Mr. Stanhope!"

She broke the spell with her low, rich voice.

"Have I? I was thinking. What a picture this is, Miss Ashburton! I like these soft lights and shadows, and this murmur of the waters."

"Neither wholly dark nor bright, Gray by day, and gray by night— That's the light, the sky for me, By the margin of the sea."

He had a deep, mellow voice, and impressed every one with a sense of maturity beyond his years. As he repeated the lines she listened intently. It drifted her too near the shore that she deemed it wise to avoid.

"Your fancies clothe themselves in neutral tints," she said.

Her beauty flashed out with this; the lips wreathed in scarlet, the cheeks wore a perfect summer glow.

"Not always," he replied.

She understood the glance that accompanied the words, and for an instant every pulse quivered.

"Come, help me down!" she exclaimed, half petulantly. "I don't imagine those airy fabrics in your brain are of as much importance as my reaching mother earth safely."

It was seldom that she descended to little coquetries, and this jarred upon him, as she intended it should; only for a moment though.

"No," he returned, quietly. "I don't know that a man's dreams are ever to be compared with the comfort of the woman"—"he loves," trembled on his tongue—"of the woman entrusted to his care," he finished, bravely.

Then he bit his lip. He did mean to tell Miss Ashburton of his love, not hoping to gain anything thereby, but because he wanted her to know what would be the inspiration of his whole life.

She anticipated something of the kind, and for the next half-hour was brilliant and changeable as a sprite. By this time they had reached Mrs. Darricott's.

"You are coming over this evening?" she asked.

There was to be a kind of summer-night's repast of creams, jellies, and fruits, that Mrs. Darricott knew how to serve up in elegant style.

"Perhaps."

He uttered the word doubtfully.

"I won't have you proving recreant," she returned, with her bright smile; and just now it seemed as if her soul drew near to him.

She ran upstairs with a wonderful flush upon her



face, and a tremor through all her nerves. She had seen men in love before, but those eloquent eyes appealed to her as nothing ever had. Was it simply luring him on to pain and disappointment? Could she not endow him with something beside her love—raise him to her social height?

There were some letters lying upon the tiny centre table in her room. Two from girl correspondents, whose epistles always told the same story, and one from her mother. She broke the seal of that languidly.

There was a curious dissimilarity between this mother and daughter, and more of a friendship than love. Clarice always ruled, though her sway was gentle.

She opened her letter carefully and read half a dozen lines. Then her lips became pale and compressed, her brow settled to a sharp, unbelieving frown. Twice over the long, closely written letter did she go, then you would hardly have known the brilliant Miss Ashburton of an hour ago.

The news stunned her. The missing link in the evidence had been supplied at last, and that beyond a doubt.

Their handsome fortune would be swept away at a single blow. Mrs. Ashburton's lawyer, who had heretofore sneered in a lofty fashion, admitted that the case would be utterly lost. It was to come on again in a month. This was all the respite they had.

Then followed Mrs. Ashburton's lamentations. If Clarice had only married, if they had a home, but how could they both live on her paltry five hundred a year, a small fortune she had inherited from her father? There was still a month left, and if Clarice made good use of it—if she would even smile upon some of her old suitors—the misfortune might be alleviated.

"Heaven alone knows what we are to do!" and Clarice could almost hear her mother's complaining tone in the ejaculation.

She roused herself at length and went to her mirror. Thence was reflected a handsome woman, elegant in form and carriage, accomplished in all the graces and refinements of society, loving ease and luxury with an æsthetic nature that could be satisfied only with delicate surroundings; and she was to be absolutely penniless, to be forced to labour!

I ought to be able to tell you how the true woman spirit within her rose above such paltry considerations. I am sorry I cannot, but I think that any woman reared as she had been, and possessing a sensitive, high-bred soul, would shrink from the struggle at first. Stoicism and apathy are not always indicative of true courage, though they are not unfrequently confused with it. Then she knew the world and all that she would lose in the way of prestige and friendship. It is not a pleasant thing to go down in the social scale for no fault of one's own.

If she had married. What had she been waiting for all these years? If for an extravagant, enthusiastic love, Arnold Stanhope was ready to lay it at her feet.

She smiled faintly now, and a wandering colour fluttered up into her face. Out there on the long vine-wreathed balcony she had half-fancied him the one man who could conquer her restless soul, bring her to peace through a new faith. She was glad now that he had not spoken, and she had not yielded to any vain dream. But, oh, what a different world when one held it at bay! It looked like a stern, cold master to her now.

She excused herself from dinner and had a cup of tea sent up to her, but when the guests began to assemble she came down glowing and resplendent in her loveliness. Her dress was some thin fabric overshot with golden gleams, and low down in her hair, dusky as a moonless midnight, she wore a cluster of waxen lilies. Another cluster adorned her belt, but no jewels were visible to glare or divide attention. She had this peculiarity that in every change of array she looked more lovely than before. When she dressed simply you simply adored.

Mr. Minturn stood in the wide doorway—a gentleman by birth, education and position, thoroughly polished, and worth half a million. She knew he was interested in her, that it would not be a difficult matter to make him love her, and once in earnest no loss of fortune on her side would change his regard. She did like him. The bright, butterfly existence must end at some period. She could not hope to remain always young and attractive, and age would be more inviting in a palace than in a hovel. She swallowed something like a great pang, then her resolve was taken.

The nod and the smile she gave Mr. Minturn were strangely fascinating. He held out his hand and returned the glance with the air of a man who has made his election.

"They have been inquiring about you in the drawing-room," he said; "I believe they want you to sing."

"I haven't an atom of voice just now," she answered, and her eyes wandered out to the balcony.

"Let us walk a little in the moonlight, then," he said, and led her thither.

It was natural for her to be charming, and when she chose she could make the spell very dangerous. She chose now. Her voice, as she talked, accorded so perfectly with the witchery of the scene, with the silvery glow upon tree and shrub and the distant murmur of the in-coming tide. The echo of gay voices floated out to them occasionally, making little breaks in the tender stillness.

"Go up and see where Miss Ashburton is," Mrs. Darricott said to a servant in the hall.

"There, we have played truant long enough," Clarice exclaimed, with a lingering cadence in her voice. "The house will be searched for me."

He detained her a moment more to engage her for a ride on the following morning. Then they entered the room together, and something in Mr. Minturn's air impressed the company as much as it did Clarice.

Arnold Stanhope saw it also, saw it with a pang that seemed to rend his very being. If he had spoken a few hours ago, when he believed he had no right, it might have made the way smoother for him now. Fate, in one of her freaks, had brought him suddenly up to her level.

There was the usual amount of gay pleasure, for Mrs. Darricott's evening entertainments never lagged or grew dull—laughing, talking, and singing being succeeded by a few round dances in the spacious hall. Miss Ashburton was bewildering, all the more so because she felt herself acting a part. How many of these people would shower attentions and compliments upon her if they knew the truth? It was the way of the world, a cruel, bitter way, but the single-handed could not contravert it. As well take the good while it lasted.

Coming from the supper-room the party sought the smooth-shaven, velvety lawn; and, finding Miss Ashburton alone, Mr. Stanhope drew her down a shady path, just beside them, so quickly that she had hardly time to resist, but she thrust about her a cold and she fancied impenetrable armour.

He seemed to feel the passive pride in the hand he had taken, a subtle warning that had checked him heretofore, but to-night he was armed as well.

"You know," he began, with a strange abruptness, yet his voice was sweet and low; "you must know that I love you. And I think—"

"Hush!" she made answer. "Don't think of me at all. I would have saved you this, for I am no designing coquette. It is quite impossible."

A slender ray of light fell between the great pines on one hand. He saw in her face, calm as it was, a little terror and pain, and she read in his earnest resolve, a truth that thrilled her, though she strove to thrust it aside.

"I believe you can—perhaps do realize the fine harmony between our souls. Once in a lifetime, perhaps, every human heart reaches this point, and, if it passes without tasting the draught, the after years will be flavourless. We have come to the true level of ours—can you deny it?"

Something in his force won her against herself. The feeling that had been gaining ground since mid-afternoon threatened to master her. She made a great effort.

"It is not best for either of us to think of this," she said, huskily. "Shall I tell you the truth? This morning I believed myself an heiress, to-night I could atone this gay crowd with a word. I am sailing under false colours. My riches have taken to themselves wings. In a few weeks our lawsuit will be decided against us, and I shall come down from this golden pedestal. If folly would have been allowable before, it is so no longer."

"You think that love is folly?" he said, with an eager look and tone.

"Between us, certainly."

"But not impossible?"

The scarlet blood that crimsoned her neck and throat answered him. She absolutely shivered, though the summer night was warm.

"Let us talk sense." She said it in a cold, hard, yet tremulous tone; "you are poor and ambitious, but have already gained a foothold in the path that leads to fame and honour. To be cramped and fettered now would surely work your ruin. I have lived an easy, indolent and luxurious life, and cannot take my downfall in a sweet and contented frame of mind. I should make you miserable and fail to secure happiness myself. It would be two lives wrecked. So let us forget."

"I cannot!" He made a quick, passionate gesture, and would have clasped her in his arms if she had not moved away. "And I believe your soul realizes the truth. If you are poor, then I have a right to speak. I have another right—"

An almost swartly flush overspread his face, and he bit his lip with some strong resolve. It would

not be wise to tell her that he could bid for her hand, and what if his hope hung on that slender thread?

"I have been honest with you," she resumed, "and now I ask you to be generous. Besides myself, I have a mother, who would expect my home to be hers. She will feel her loss tenfold more keenly than I, and would bewail my folly continually. I think too highly of you to bring you any harder trial than that of forgetting me."

"You could love me." He said it in a slow, positive way. "Do women ever take their hearts into account?"

"Not if they are wise;" and she gave a short, bitter laugh, turning as she did so. Two or three stragglers were entering the walk. The conversation was over for that night, for all time, she thought; but a curious light came into Stanhope's eyes.

"No," he mused to himself; "I won't bid for her, even if the power is mine. How strange that she should have told me her secret in that frank way! I wonder if she could marry that Minturn, if he could win her to a tender regard?"

Two or three very gay days passed after this. Miss Ashburton was more lovely and more fascinating than ever. Mr. Minturn followed her like a shadow, and Mrs. Darricott smiled complacently. In town next winter she meant to take the credit of the match. Clarice was rent with contending emotions. Half a dozen times a day she read her mother's letter. Their loss was certain, and she had only this little breathing-space between her and the desert, if indeed she should be unwise enough to choose it.

Just after noon one day she stood with a group of ladies who were waving handkerchiefs to a little boat being pushed out from the shore. Two men, standing beside each other, pictured themselves upon her memory in a manner that affected her like a dim presentiment. If the courtly graces, peculiar refinements, and wealth of the one could be united with the fire, ambition, and passion of the other—if, in short, she could hold all the good things of this life in one clasp! After all, wasn't she longing for a bliss that could never come?

Down the bay sped the boat, the white sail fluttering in the wind. At midnight its occupants were to return, laden with spoils from the deep.

"What a lovely time they will have!" some one said.

A soft sky, and not over-bright sun, and a breeze quivering musically when it shook a cluster of leaves together, rendered it very delightful, and they would come back as they had times before. So the ladies visited, and gossiped, and drank a quiet tea; but Clarice, rambling about restlessly, noticed that the sun dropped amid mountains of yellowish black, and that farther down the south rose piles of threatening purple. A few stars made their appearance, then ominous flashes of lightning ran across the sky, but there was no thunder. The air began to darken, and they heard the great swells outside the bay. Mrs. Darricott was filled with alarm, and some of the guests proposed that they should go down to the beach; so they huddled into the family carriage.

Just as they reached their destination a few large drops began to fall, and a stroke of thunder seemed to tear the very heavens with its crash. The storm burst furiously; great waves tramped up the sand, mingling their roar with the din of the elements, and vivid flashes of blinding light were followed by intense, appalling darkness, amid which came groans and shrieks as of souls in deadly peril, and the moaning wind making lamentations over them. Wives and mothers bewailed the fate of those they had parted with so gaily a brief while before.

One and another tried to comfort them. Of course the yacht would put in somewhere, yet where was there a place of safety along that dangerous coast?

They watched until midnight, when the storm lulled, and through broken drifts of purple black gleamed a few straggling stars. Of all those who had warred with the elements that night there were two for whom no wife or mother had prayed. Clarice Ashburton thought of this. Were their lives of any account to her? One she had meant to marry, the other—well, what matter if she told the truth to herself? The other she loved. Her breath came in great gasps. Did she dare ask Heaven for him, and prove recreant afterward?

In the gray dawn of a summer morning there was a stir about the place. Some men had gone down the shore with boats, and were now returning. It was not light enough to distinguish the burden they bore, if indeed any, only their coming back seemed a guarantee of some news other than despair. Wrapped in shawls, the more impatient ran down to the landing. Clarice crept out to the long balcony, and saw a crowd of half-indistinct figures, wending their way with some burden, nearer and nearer. She ran forward as they came up the steps and laid it at her very feet, as it were. A glimmer of rose and silver in the East struck faintly against the tangled and

dripping chestnut hair and the pallid face, strong, patient, softened to a strange sweetness. She turned away, feeling faint.

Like one in a dream, she heard the confused stories, some voices confessing that their safety was owing to Stanhope's bravery and coolness. He had been struck by a splinter of the boat in rescuing Mr. Minturn. The man had the strength and will of a giant.

So they were all safe. Women laughed, and cried, and kissed in a breath. Miss Ashburton, alone, was calm. She seemed to herself a statue, waiting to be inspired by a word, and that came as they lounged around the breakfast table.

"Stanhope has come to his senses. The doctor says he will be all right in a few days, but it was looking death in the face."

That evening Mr. Minturn and Mrs. Darricott talked it over in the drawing-room. Just before the guest went away he sought Miss Ashburton, in her shady corner, and uttered half a dozen words. The prize she had coveted was within her grasp; but its golden glitter had no allurements. She shivered as his hand touched hers.

A day or two afterwards she rode down to the villa with Mrs. Darricott, who was ready to pay honours to the hero of the day.

He was still weak and pale, and a bruise just above the temple told how narrow his escape had been. The nobleness of the face touched her as it had more than once before. She lingered by the sofa after the others had left him.

"You were very generous that night of the storm," she said, slowly.

"Why? Because I saved Minturn? It was a terrible temptation to me, more than you can ever know. But I thought you loved him, and for another reason, my life was of but little value."

"It is of value to me," she answered.

"Miss Ashburton!" he exclaimed, raising himself partially, though the effort made him paler than before. "You'll know it soon though—I do stand in your way. I am the heir to the Ashburton estates. So if I had gone down—"

"I asked your life of Heaven that night," she said, almost fiercely; then she paused.

A moment ago she would have offered him the love he had once pleaded for; now the gift was taken out of her hands.

"Because you desired it? Will you accept it now?"

"I am not worthy. Remember all I said that night."

She turned away, despising herself. He caught her dress.

"Clarion," and his voice trembled with emotion, "if I had honoured you less for your truth than I must have told you all. I was too proud to buy your love. I am too proud now; but you can give it."

Should she make both lives a blank? Pride swayed her powerfully; but love pleaded as well. She put her hand in his, and he pressed it to his lips.

Mrs. Ash ton made an amiable mother-in-law, and Arnold Stanhope was very well satisfied with the gifts fortune brought him. D. M. D.

#### EARTHQUAKE WAVES.

THE writer was in Australia when the great Chilean earthquake occurred in 1868. The wave-breaking phenomena, as regards Australasia, occurred only at New Zealand, and even there it was confined to one or two places noted for their susceptibility to earthquake disturbance. At Sydney, 1,200 miles distant, the sea merely ebbed and flowed in rather quick succession, and for very short periods. At Newcastle (N.S.W.), eighty miles north of Sydney, the waters of the river Hunter were so strangely disturbed by electricity as to cause the iron steamboats to swing broadside on to the tide, besides which, as at Sydney, the tide rose and fell. At Adelaide and King George's Sound the tide also ebbed and flowed in like manner, whilst Melbourne was totally unaffected by oceanic disturbance. The wave broke on the shores of Japan with a height and force second only to what occurred at Callao. The same phenomena, but on a very small scale, also occurred in a few islands in the South Pacific and at the Chincha Islands, off the Peruvian coast.

Now, it will be noticed that the localities where the wave broke on the shores are notoriously subject to earthquake disturbance, Japan being only second on the list after Chili, and New Zealand next. Now these remarkable exceptions would point to a susceptible subterranean connection with the present great focus of earthquake disturbance on the Peruvian seaboard. If this view be adopted it is only reasonable to assume that a subterranean disturbance took place at Japan, New Zealand, and other islands to which the Chilean earth-throes penetrated, and at each caused

that mysterious prior recession of the sea from the shores in each locality where the great sea-waves subsequently broke. Now, it appears to the writer that the philosophic nut to crack is, what agency caused the prior recession of the sea which took place at all the places where the great waves broke on the shore?

To suppose that the great earth-throes on the South American coast possessed the power to project a wave across the vast Pacific Ocean to a maximum distance of 10,500 miles, and that such a wave travelled at the rate of from 295 to 394 miles per hour, is only preposterous, in a second degree, to suppose that a wave could exist on the ocean, or that a wave has progressive motion until it reaches a shore, when it becomes a wave of translation. It is directly against hydrostatic laws to assert that a single wave can exist on the ocean, much less can it progress forward.

If this were possible it would be within the power of the engines of a ship to drive her as fast as a locomotive on rails; whereas we find that nearly all a ship's motive power is absorbed in cleaving the particles of water apart to admit the bow, and it is due to those retarding particles clinging with tenacious grip to the vessel, and which to the last grip fast to counter and stern until torn away.

I am really at a loss to conceive how any scientific man should have propagated the idea, and propagated it as a fact, that any of the forces of nature are capable of creating waves on the ocean unless the initial force be constant.

Let us suppose ourselves on board ship in a hurricane of 12. If the wind (the initial force) abates to 10, the sea soon falls in altitude, and so on down the scale to 0, a dead, glassy calm. Thus an earthquake may, by a sudden upheaval, cause (not one, but many) waves; yet, owing to the cessation of the initial force, such waves would not be observed by vessels at a distance of ten miles, much less ten thousand! It is true that waves will be transmitted by hydrostatic undulation to great distances, and so fast as to outrun the storm which gave them birth; but they owed their power of transmission to the sustained initial force, as when that ceased the power of transmission would also cease.

The diurnal flow of the great tidal wave is sustained by the continued action of the moon and sun, but when those planets cease to exert that power the tidal waters seek their normal level in the ocean.

There are people who have a fixed idea that ocean waves possess progressive motion, which is a mistake. Let us suppose that they have the power of progression. What would be the consequence when a hurricane was blowing on to a shore? The waters of each wave would be impelled on to the beach in quick succession, so as to bond back the waters of rivers and creeks, lowlands would be flooded, and its attendant ruin to the inhabitants would follow.

S.

#### FACTIÆ.

A NEWLY married couple riding in a carriage were overturned, whereupon a bystander said it was a shocking sight. "Yes," said another, "to see those just wedded 'fall out' so soon."

"There is a whisper that one of the purposes of the Queen's visit to Baden-Baden is to make a match." There is another whisper that Mr. Lowe is thinking of taxing it.—*Hornet*.

"MAMMA," said a precocious little boy, who, against his will, was made to rock the cradle of his baby brother, "if Heaven has any more babies to give away don't you take 'em."

A DROVER who sells his cattle by live weight, always gives them as much water as they will drink, before driving them on to the scales. "That," he says, "is what I understand by 'watering stock.'"

A GENTLEMAN of the negro persuasion thus philosophizes and reasonizes with the white world:—"All men are made of clay, and, like a meerschaum pipe, are more valuable when they are highly coloured." There is something in "Negro-head" after all.

A YOUNG lady with a very pretty foot, but a rather large ankle, went into a San Francisco shoe-shop to be measured. The admiring shopman, who is of Gallic extraction complimented her in the following queer way: "Madam, you one beautiful foot, but ze legs commence too immediately."

THE LOST FOUND.—A lawyer recently advertised for a lady whose residence had been long sought, but in vain, and whose evidence was very necessary in an action. He called particular attention to her bad figure, advanced years, and want of good looks in general. He got an answer from her the next day.

AN INJURED HUSBAND.—An injured husband at Berlin has posted the following "notice":—"My

wife having deceived me in regard to her age before her marriage, claiming to be twenty-six only when she was thirty-two, and had false teeth, while I am only twenty-two and have sound teeth; therefore I will pay no debts of her contracting."

#### FULL MEASURE.

A little bit of a thing, who had just got back from a party, was asked by her mamma how she enjoyed herself.

"Oh, mamma!" she said, "I'm so full of happiness—I couldn't be no happier, without I was bigger."

#### BRIEF, AND TO THE POINT.

A Berkshire papa put it thus to his daughter's beau:

"Jim! If you want Lu you can have her; but I don't want you hanging about unless you mean business. If you intend to marry her be quick about it, for I can't be kept awake nights much longer."

#### A SAD CASE.

Jennie: "Why, ma, Bridget looks awful grim." Mother: "What's the matter, Bridget? You do seem very stupid."

Bridget: "No, it ain't stupid I is, but sleepy. Faith, I didn't sleep a wink last night for dream-ing."

A LITTLE six-year-old boy was asked by his teacher to write a composition on the subject of water, and the following is the production: "Water is good to drink, to swim in, and to skate on when frozen. When I was a little baby the nurse used to bathe me every morning in water. I have been told that the Infants don't wash themselves but once in ten years. I wish I was an Infant!"

INVOLUNTARY CONFESSION.—"John Rouse, why wilt thou do so?" This was said by Thomas Hazard, a substantial Quaker merchant sixty years ago to Johnny Rouse, a man in his employ, whom he found before a magistrate, and that not for the first time, charged with stealing. "Why wilt thou do so, thou foulish man? thou always gets caught." "Why, Mr. Hazard," says Johnny, "I don't get caught half the time."

#### ASTONISHMENT FOR THE STOMACH.

"Why don't you give us something new?" said a toper to a temperance lecturer—"something startling and fresh, and not the old story ('his') over and over again?"

"I admit my inability to give you any new food for the brain, or anything fresh and startling. But you can take a glass of water and astonish your stomach."

#### RESTRAINING DIET.

An old lady, recently visiting a prison, asked one of the attendants why the prisoners received such coarse food?

He told her it was to keep their blood from becoming impure; and when she asked what they would do if their blood was impure he drily responded:

"Break out!"

#### CLEAR AS DAYLIGHT.

"Chuffee, what do you tink de moose usefull ob de planets—de sun or de moon?"

"Well, Sambo, I tink de moon orter take de fust rank in dat article."

"Why you tink so, Chuffee?"

"Well, I tell you: kase de moon shines by night when we want light, and de sun shines by day when we don't!"

#### BUCOLIC INFORMATION.

Young Farmer: "Guv'nor, what is that queer-looking animal about?"

Knowing Agriculturist: "Why, sonny, that's one of those chaps called artists, who wander about the land to pick up murders, steamboat horrors, and other shocking accidents."

Young Farmer: "My gracious! how thankful I ought to be that I'm not one."

#### THE DUNCE BLOCK.

A schoolmaster tells the following:—

"I was once teaching in a quiet country village. The second morning I had time to survey my surroundings, and among the scanty furniture I espied a three-legged stool."

"Is this the dunce block?" I asked of a little girl of five years.

"The dark eyes sparkled, the curls nodded assent, and the lips rippled out:

"I think so; the teacher always sits on it."

A JUST COMPLAINT.—A chignon hater indulges in the following reflections regarding ladies' head-dresses at the theatre:—"If a man were to take his seat at any place of public gathering or amusement, and keep his hat on, he would be hissed, or hustled out and handed to the police. But women, night after night, go with the most preposterous pile of rigging on top of their heads, just as high as men's hats, and keep the unhappy man behind dodging the never-quiet pie, and never giving one moment's clear view of the stage or performers. Perhaps, the inhar-



monious-tempered old man says, it would be well to revive the old Paritane text: "Top knot, come down."

**FISHY.**—A provincial paper speaks of several fishing-boats from Buckie passing through the Caledonian Canal, "to prosecute the cod fishing round the Hebrides." Quite right! There is something unnatural in the notion of cod fishing for their fishy relatives, whether at the Hebrides or elsewhere. But in what court can they be prosecuted?—Before the Procurator Fiscal? On the principle of the old motto, "*Qui caput capitur*," we hope the cannibalistic cod who wish to catch will be caught and so catch it!—*Pan.*

#### EXPECTATIONS.

It is reported as a recent occurrence that a poor man fell in love with an heiress, and the passion being returned it only needed the consent of the parents to make them happy.

At length, meeting the father, he asked for the daughter's hand.

"How much money can you command?" asked the millionaire, gruffly.

"Not much," was the reply.

"What are your expectations?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I 'expect,' if you refuse your consent, to run away with your daughter and marry her without it."

**ELEVATION OF THE LABOURER.**—The public mind seems just now to be principally occupied in bemoaning the degradation of the labouring element, and in devising methods of elevating and educating the working man. When every one has said all he is going to say upon this difficult problem, we mean to suggest two things which have hitherto been entirely overlooked.—First, the working man cannot effectively "elevate" until he has wealth to pay for education, and leisure to acquire it. Secondly, when he gets wealth and leisure he won't be a working man. Now it is a stubborn truth that there can be no wealth and leisure in this world unless there is a great deal of hard work done to produce them; and there cannot be a great deal of hard work done without a great many men working very hard to do it. From all of which we argue that the Niagara river cannot fall upward, that the tides cannot be repressed without tampering with the moon, that an oyster cannot fly like an eagle, that the man whose function it is to labour will labour, principally; and the man whose function it is to delude him will chiefly prate of elevation.

#### EVERYTHING ON THE BILL OF FARE.

A funny incident recently occurred at an hotel. A gentleman, well known for many years as a patron of the house, arrived by the evening train, half frozen and starving, just as supper was being served. He immediately repaired to the dining-room, and in reply to the waiter's inquiry: "What will you take, sir?" said: "Bring me everything on the bill of fare."

The waiter stood for a moment, lost in silent amazement, and then hurried to the office to consult Mr. Dickinson, one of the proprietors, as to what he should do.

"Do!" replied his master. "Why, fulfil the gentleman's order, and," he added, with a merry twinkle in his eye, "be sure you supply the order all at once."

In about ten minutes, during which the guest had been fretting and fuming, the whole force of waiters, fourteen in number, appeared in single file, bearing any number of small dishes on trays, and proceeded in solemn procession to the hungry man's table.

"Hullo!" he exclaimed; "what's the meaning of all this?"

"You ordered everything on the bill of fare, sir," meekly put in the head waiter.

The guest at once acknowledged the jest, and ordered a basket of champagne on the spot.

#### SLANG.

Girls, don't talk slang. If it is necessary that any one in the family should do that, let it be your big brother, though I would advise him not to adopt it, where there is an elegant, systematized language that he can just as well use. But don't you do it. You have no idea how it sounds to ears unused or averse to it, to hear a young lady, when she is asked if she will go with you to some place, answer, "Not much;" or, if requested to do something she does not wish, to hear her say, "Can't see it!"

Not long ago I heard a young miss, who is educated and accomplished, in speaking of a young man, say that she intended to "go for him!" and when her sister asked her assistance at some work she answered, "Not for Joe!"

Now, young ladies of unexceptionable character and really good education fall into this habit, thinking it shows smartness to answer back in slang phrases, and they soon slip flippantly from their tongues, with saucy pertness that is neither ladylike nor becoming. "I bet," or "you bet,"

may be well enough among men, who are trading in horses or land; but the contrast is startling and positively shocking when a young man is holding the hand of his lady-love to hear these words issue from her lips. They seem at once to surround her with the rougher association of his daily life, and bring her down from the pedestal of her purity, whereon he had placed her, to his own coarse level.

I know the bright-eyed girl who reads this will think the matter over, and do what is right, and discard slang and unladylike phrases.

#### TWO LIVES.

OLD Moneybags holds all he gets  
With firmly clenching hands;  
He looks his gold in massive chest,  
Embraced by iron bands.  
He never gave a coin to help  
A toiler on the way,  
Yet untold wealth is his, if that  
Be true his neighbours say.  
If in his heart a single grain  
Of love he e'er possessed,  
Tis many, many years ago  
It vanished from his breast.

His neighbour living o'er the way  
Has store of money too,  
But, unlike Moneybags, he works  
The good that he can do.  
He hoards not up his glittering gold  
In blind idolatry,  
And oft his generous hand is seen  
In acts of charity.  
His fellows love and honour him  
Who does the good he can,  
And hail him as the perfect type  
Of nature's nobleman.

One gives to help the poor along,  
One makes to flatter self;  
One seeks the gold for the good it does,  
One worships wordly pelf;  
One has the love of grateful hearts,  
One only gathers scorn;  
One has a smile from every face,  
One ever seems forlorn;  
And when the day of reck'ning comes  
I'd rather be that one  
Whose life was made of kindness  
And noble actions done.

C. D.

#### GEMS.

THE sting of a reproach is the truth of it.  
HAPPINESS may be defined to be the excess of pleasure over pain.

MAN passes his life in reasoning on the past, in complaining of the present, and in trembling for the future.

THE blindness of the understanding is as much to be pitied as the blindness of the eyes; and it is neither laughable nor criminal for a man to lose his way in either case.

ALL our friends, perhaps, desire our happiness, but then it must be in their own way; what a pity that they do not employ the same zeal in making us happy in ours.

HATRED and vengeance are very different sentiments; one is that of little minds; the other the effect of a law to which great souls are obedient. Heaven avenges and does not hate. Hatred is the vice of narrow souls; they feed it with all their listlessness, and make it the pretext of base tyrannies.

#### HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

**COCONUT ICE.**—Red: Put in your pan 4lb. of lump sugar and a pint of water; put it on the fire; have a thermometer by your side; let it boil for a few minutes, then put a teaspoonful of red colour; then boil it to 235 degs. by the thermometer by standing it in the sugar; take it off the fire, let it stand for ten minutes or so to dispel the heat; have ready ½lb. of grated and well-dried cocconut, but not shrivelled and burnt. Well work your sugar against the sides of your pan until it gets thick or creamy, but do not get it too thick, or it will be bad to turn out of your pan; when you think it is thick enough (but practice will soon tell you the thickness) stir in your grated cocconut; then pour on water paper, with tin frames around about 6in. by 8in. square; when cold, cut it in strips about an inch wide. It looks nicer by making some white and pouring it on the red in the same frames, but be sure and wash out your pan before boiling another lot, and don't put on your cover for any of the ices, or you will never get them to grain well. When I commenced trade I could not tell the reason why some boils were first-rate, while others I

could not grain at all, and I found out at last it was owing to putting on the cover of the pan whilst boiling the sugar.—A.

#### STATISTICS.

**LOAN SOCIETIES.**—The annual return of loan societies in England gives an abstract of the accounts of 531 for the year 1870. At the end of that year they had 34,883 members, and sums amounting to 400,712l. were in borrowers' hands. In the course of the year there had been 144,489 applications for loans, and as many as 132,933 loans were made. Sums amounting to 8,696l. were received for forms of application and for inquiry, and 31,599l. for interest; the expenses of management were 17,678l.; the net profit is returned at 19,958l. Many of the societies return some loss in the year, the aggregate of losses being 1,812l. It appears that 9,809 summonses were issued in the year for sums amounting to 21,139l.; and there were 2,137 distress warrants; 16,957l. was recovered. Costs to the amount of 2,498l. were incurred in recovering loans, and 2,076l. was paid by borrowers, or sureties, for costs. The societies are chiefly found in the metropolis and in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Many have but a small capital to lend, but Manchester has a loan society with 4,900l. in borrowers' hands, Bolton has one with 11,004l., Birmingham one with 17,170l., and Nottingham one with 15,674l. lent out when the year closed.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Prince of Wales has promised a cup value five guineas for the best show of roses at the horticultural show, to be held at the same time as the agricultural show in Lynn next June.

A PROPOSAL has been made for the establishment of a religious association in connection with the Church of England, under the title of the "Association of Friends of the Infirmary in Mind."

THE latest thing from Australia is kangaroo skin; it makes excellent leather, is very pliable and soft, wearing a long time without cracking, and turning water better than calf skin. Kangaroo is emphatically a new sensation in the leather line.

We are informed, on trustworthy authority, that since the Government are compelled, in deference to public wish, to abandon the Denmark Hill site, negotiations are now being carried on for the purpose of obtaining land at Brockley, at a cost of 400l. an acre, whereon to erect the convict prison.

PRINCE ALAMATY, son of the late King Theodore, who, for nearly four years, has been under the guardianship of Captain Speedy, was entrusted, on the 4th inst., to the Rev. Jex Blake, Principal of Cheltenham College. The boy is nearly eleven years old. His future has not been determined—probably a Civil Service career in India.

THE hothouse intended to contain specimens of growing cotton plants during the Exhibition of 1872 is now being built in the west annex, near Prince Albert's Road, by Mr. F. G. Messenger, of Loughborough. The plants are being raised and will be exhibited by Major R. Trevor Clarke, of Welton Park, Daventry.

We learn that a few days ago Mr. Archibald Brown, brother of Mr. John Brown, Her Majesty's personal attendant, was married at Windsor parish church to Miss Johns, niece of Mr. William Miles Tapner, of Windsor Castle. The bridegroom is Prince Leopold's personal attendant. The church was filled with spectators.

**STREAM V. MANUAL LABOUR.**—The great pyramid, which is seven hundred feet square and five hundred high, and weighs 12,760,000,000 tons, required, according to Herodotus, the labour of 100,000 men for twenty years to build it; but Dr. Lardner affirmed that 480 tons of coal, with an engine and hoisting machine would have raised every stone to its position.

**MONSTER OF THE DEEP.**—At Norwiche, Conn., at a recent descent made by one of Mr. Fuller's divers in Shetucket, he fell, unexpectedly, into a fissure between the rocks at the bottom, nearly twenty feet deep. Here he was assailed by a large animal, half serpent and half fish, which snapped viciously at the eye plates of his helmet, and, though repeatedly struck with an iron bar, was with difficulty driven away.

MADAME SESSI has just appeared for the first time in Madlle. Nilsson's part of Ophelia, and with great success. A rumour was spread that Madlle. Sessi was Prussian; but the patriotic anxiety of the Partisan public has been put to rest by its being published that the *prima donna's* grandfather was a Neapolitan, her mother Roman, that her sister has become the Princess Spinelli, and always inhabits Naples, and that Madlle. Sessi, herself of Vienna, is no Prussian.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. U.—The manuscript is declined with thanks.

J. E. A.—The receipt of the packet is acknowledged with thanks.

JESSIE C.—You are quite right. Snow fell on the Derby Day of 1867.

EMILY.—The handwriting, though marked by some peculiarities, is good.

E. S.—You should tell your tale to the house-surgeon of the hospital nearest to you, and carefully follow the advice he gives you.

W. H.—If you will read a little about the classical gods and goddesses you will find that Juno is an inappropriate name for a man. Juno is the name of Jupiter's wife.

BEATRICE, JESSIE, and EDITH.—A note forwarded by so much indefiniteness and confusion cannot be attended to. Each should have written on a separate piece of paper.

WILD JACK (Cirencester).—The probability is that the Act does not apply in the case mentioned; but, as your statement is not so precise as it might be, we recommend you to inquire at the licensing office in your town.

A. YOUNG, COOK.—White of egg and sugar beaten to a froth will probably answer your purpose. It can be placed upon the plait in any quantity you please, and "sets" immediately. The proportion is an ounce of loaf sugar to the white of four eggs.

LIVIE E.—The local authorities of your neighbourhood will render such assistance as the case may deserve. The addresses of individuals cannot be published in these columns; they must be searched for in the Directories or Court Guides of the day.

HARRY M. A.—The young lady's friends would require a settlement, notwithstanding your minority. Such a settlement can be effected under the provisions of a modern Act of Parliament, but should be prepared by competent professional hands.

BELLEZA.—Although you ask for advice your letter is without candour. We are therefore only in a position to utter the truism that a great disparity in the social status of lovers is usually fraught with misery for the gentler sex. The look of hair is missing; it has "blown away," ominous perhaps of "somebody's love."

E. K. E.—The sketch is interesting in a simple manner. If any part of it is new we cannot say. Who can have read all the stories ever published? The pivot upon which the interest turns is, however, not exactly new. While reading it one is reminded of that pathetic old song, "The Mistletoe Bough."

T. K. (Liverpool).—We may be mistaken, of course, but as well as we can judge the description which gives the age as twenty-one, and announces the occupation of the person of that age as chief officer of a vessel, with expectations of promotion—such a description we say can scarcely be accurate.

WILFRED B.—By reason of the business relations detailed it is just possible that your freedom of choice may be somewhat restricted. It may be worth consideration whether you should not prefer the change in your method of life to come about in a less forced and extraordinary way than is suggested by the letter to which this notice is a reply.

GERTRUDE D.—Very likely it is possible to possess, amongst other good things, weekly soup tickets, and yet be far distant from what a lively youth might term "the ticket for soup." The anomalies of your note invite a longer reply, but we trust for the sake of brevity the homeliness of the expression may be understood and excused.

P. J.—We have received the charades; they seem rather stale. That one about Paris being pris without the letter a is particularly old friend. The "Recollections" commence with an awkward blunder; hills don't fade away. They may be tunnelled through by the engineer, or cracked by an earthquake, but they retain their original outlines. So much so that "as old as the hills" is a well-known proverb.

CONSTANT AND TRUE might consider whether it is not his first duty to be true to himself, and how that duty can be reconciled by making a declaration to a lady who has already pointedly expressed her preference for another person. At all events honour demands that he should for the present abstain from pressing his suit. If the lady is likely to be eventually disengaged, she at all events requires time "to be off with the old love before she is on with the new."

T. B. L.—The great comet of 1861 was seen in England at the end of June in that year. The diameter of the nucleus was estimated at about 400 miles, while the rate at which the comet travelled is said to be ten million

miles in twenty-four hours. It has been suggested that the earth passed through the tail of this comet and was not affected thereby, because comets have so little density.

BEATRICE.—A fair share of romance at your age is harmless and to be expected. Yet a gentle hint about riding your hobby with a loose rein may not be misplaced. A friend might ask how, simply as a matter of taste, you can be indifferent whether your future husband be an officer or a tradesman, unless you are altogether indifferent to his position in life.

J. H.—Having no wish to daunt you in your desire to become a rhymster, we will only say concerning your attempt that although it is very bad it is not so bad as to forbid us to say "try again." We are afraid you must have a teacher for the vocal music. Had you possessed the natural gift which would have enabled you to rely exclusively on "Self Help" you would not have asked us the question.

A CONSTANT READER.—If you have lost all trace of your friend's address you must write as many letters as there are districts in the colony, addressing each to the Superintendent of Police so and so. You must ask the superintendent if he can oblige you with any information about your friend Mr. . . . If you know the district, or town, or neighbourhood in which your friend was employed, of course the above amount of labour will be considerably lessened.

J. B. (Sheffield).—Throughout the piece you frequently use the third person of the verb in connection with the pronoun "thou." This is wrong; you should have put the verb in the second person. Orthographical blunders are also frequent. If you would learn to spell and write correctly you would find these much more useful attainments than the ability to send us what you consider to be poetry. If however you must make such attempts, get a more accurate knowledge. Such an error as you make in the lines about the "skylark," whose notes you would have us believe proceed from his "soft and tender bill" should be avoided.

SELF WANTED—FEMALE!

Wanted—wanted—womenkind!  
Women good and true will find  
Steady places, steady fair,  
Plenty of work and plenty of care.  
Women wanted, smart and bright,  
Not to set the nation right,  
Nor perhaps to vote with others,  
Fathers, uncles, cousins, brothers;  
But to mould the infant mind,  
Shape the future of mankind,  
Guide the feet that else might stray  
From the straight and narrow way.  
Wanted—wanted—women true,  
For the work there is to do;  
Not the living fashion plates  
Swarming round our doors and gates;  
Nor the heedless butterflies  
Basking 'neath the summer skies.  
Woman brave, that can will dare,  
Though her hands be white and fair—  
Dare to turn aside sin's cup,  
Lift a fallen sister up—  
Dare to teach Heav'n's sober truth  
To the precious growing youth.  
Wanted—wanted—women true,  
For the work there is to do!

M. A. K.

MARY, thirty-six, a widow, rather stout, would like to marry a widower.

E. SCOTT, twenty-one, tall, handsome, fond of music and children, would like to marry a tradesman about twenty-five.

X. Z., twenty-three, tall, dark, ladylike, good looking, and will make a loving wife. Respondent must be tall, dark, loving, and an officer in the army.

MESSEY LUCY, twenty-six, fair, and domesticated, would like to marry an educated, dark gentleman, not more than twenty-nine years of age; a farmer preferred.

L. T. F., twenty-three, middle height, dark hair, light blue eyes, pretty, and fond of home. Respondent must be dark, tall, good looking; a tradesman preferred.

ANNE L., nineteen, light hair, dark eyes, ladylike, and musical. Respondent must be dark, medium height, loving, and fond of home.

MARIAN, twenty-six, dark hair, hazel eyes, very good looking, and fond of home. Respondent must be fair and loving; a clerk preferred.

JANE, nineteen, tall, fair hair, dark eyes, would make a good wife. Respondent must be dark, and about twenty-six; a tradesman preferred.

EUGENIE, twenty-one, a handsome blonde, loving, good tempered, living at home, wishes to marry a gentleman in business.

S. H. M., nineteen, medium height, gray eyes, brown hair, loving, and a domestic servant. Respondent must be dark, loving, and able to keep a wife.

LOUISE, nineteen, tall, dark hair, blue eyes, fair complexion, wishes to marry a tall young gentleman; money not so much an object as a comfortable home.

CLARICE, twenty-one, medium height, dark hair and eyes, good looking, wishes to marry a tall, fair young man, in a good position, and fond of home.

NELLA, nineteen, tall, fair complexion, black eyes and hair, good singer, domesticated, and fond of home, wishes to marry a dark young man; no objection to go abroad.

STELLA, nineteen, tall, dark, accomplished, and nice looking, will have a little money at her marriage; would like to marry a young man about twenty-four, fair, middle height, and handsome; a tradesman preferred.

WILLIAM A. C., twenty-two, tall, fair, good looking, and in receipt of a good income. Respondent must be not over nineteen, medium height, dark, accomplished, and have a little money.

R. E. B., twenty-five, 5ft. 10in., a gentleman in a good position, fair, blue eyes, fond of music, wishes to marry

a dark young lady from nineteen to twenty-two, nice looking, loving, musical, who has no objection to live in Paris.

S. C. W., thirty, tall, and good looking, dark hair, moustache, and imperial; excellent position. Respondent must be well educated, musical, gentle in disposition, not over twenty-three, pretty, and thoroughly respectable.

HARRY C. R., 5ft. 10in., considered handsome, in a good situation, light curly hair, slight moustache and whiskers. Respondent must be good looking, fond of music and children.

ELIZABETH N., twenty-nine, medium height, dark, good musician, domesticated, and loving, wishes to marry a tall, dark gentleman who is steady and able to keep a wife comfortably.

ARABELLA, twenty-one, dark, Auburn hair, good tempered, cheerful, and capable of making an industrious working-man's home happy. Respondent should be a mechanic, fond of home and music.

LIGHT BLUE, twenty-seven, tall, dark eyes and hair, a good housekeeper, and musical, wishes to correspond with a tall, dark gentleman about twenty-nine, in a good position, with a view to matrimony.

SOZEL, twenty-six, tall, fair, good looking, and in a good position, wishes to marry a tall, dark, good-looking, and steady young man, who is of a kind and loving disposition, in a good position, and fond of home.

MARGARET, eighteen, dark, raven-black hair, most affectionate and domesticated, and highly good looking, wishes to correspond with a true-hearted Irishman with a view to becoming his wife.

MARION H., twenty, medium height, dark hair and eyes, handsome, accomplished, and very fond of home and children. Respondent must be not more than twenty-six, rather tall, dark, good looking, and in receipt of a good income.

W., twenty-eight, sober, active, and industrious, of an affectionate and good-tempered disposition; in good business for himself. Respondent must be possessed of from three to five hundred pounds, to increase and extend present business.

ANNETTE, twenty-two, medium height, respectfully connected, dark, curling hair, loving and lively disposition, musical, and would make a good wife. Respondent must be fair, and about twenty-eight, good tempered, affectionate, and fond of music.

FRANK, twenty-nine, 5ft. 9in., dark brown hair, brown eyes, affectionate, fond of home, the son of parents in independent circumstances, and is in a good business for himself. Respondent must be of a respectable family, domesticated, fond of music and children, lively, and very loving.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

TOM BOWLINE is responded to by—"Millie," twenty-two, 5ft. 11in., dark brown hair and eyes, loving, domesticated, and is sure she could love a sailor.

EYES RIGHT by—"C. H.," twenty-four, rather tall, dark, of a loving disposition, very industrious, and would make a home happy.

W. W. by—"Elaine," twenty-five, medium height, fair complexion, of a loving disposition, and thinks "W. W." would just suit her.

E. H. by—"Lotty," twenty-nine, tall, dark, domesticated; can make a loving wife to an affectionate husband.

ALFRED B. by—"Mary Jane," twenty, tall, fair; a housemaid, and an orphan. "Mary Jane" would try all in her power to aid "Alfred B." in his business.

HAROLD by—"Loving Lizzie," twenty-one, tall, fair, domesticated, of a loving disposition, and is sure she would make a good wife.

CHARLOTTE by—"John G.," twenty, 5ft. 9in., dark, good looking, having a salary of 80l. per annum as clerk to a brewer, with an advance of 10l. yearly until he reaches 150l. per annum.

LYDIA by—"H. B.," twenty-three, tall, fair, good looking, good tempered, and willing. He holds a very good situation under Government, and could make a comfortable home.

MOSCOW and VICTOR by—"Jessie" and "Maude," "Jessie," medium height, fair, blue eyes, nice hair, fond of home, and good tempered. "Maude," medium height, dark, nice dark eyes and dark hair; both domesticated.

TRINACULO by—"Ruth," twenty-four, domesticated, would not object to use scrubbing-brush or do anything to make home happy and comfortable; character can be strictly investigated.

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